IRISH MEMORIES

By

E. Œ. Somerville

and

Martin Ross

VIOLET FLORENCE MARTIN.

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BY

E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND MARTIN ROSS

AUTHORS OF "SOME EXPERIENCES OF AN IRISH R.M.,"
"THE REAL CHARLOTTE," ETC.

WITH 23 ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY E. Œ. SOMERVILLE AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

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to me in connection with sundry and various volumes of Recollections, that have dealt with living contemporaries with a frankness that would have seemed excessive in the case of a memoir of the life of Queen Anne. If I have gone to the opposite extreme, I hope it may be found a fault on the right side.

E. Œ. SOMERVILLE.

September 20th, 1917.

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THE TENTS OF THE ARABS.

ACT II.

KING.

What is this child of man that can conquer Time and that is braver than Love ?

EZNARZA.

Even Memory . . . .

He shall bring back our year to us that Time cannot destroy. Time cannot slaughter it if Memory says no. It is reprieved, though banished. We shall often see it, though a little far off, and all its hours and days shall dance to us and go by one by one and come back and dance again.

KING.

Why, that is true. They shall come back to us. I had thought that they that work miracles, whether in Heaven or Earth, were unable to do one thing. I thought that they could not bring back days again when once they had fallen into the hands of Time.

EZNARZA.

It is a trick that Memory can do. He comes up softly in the town or the desert, wherever a few men are, like the strange dark conjurers who sing to snakes, and he does his trick before them, and does it again and again.

KING.

We will often make him bring the old days back when you are gone to your people and I am miserably wedded to the princess coming from Tharba.

EZNARZA.

They will come with sand on their feet from the golden, beautiful desert ; they will come with a long-gone sunset each one over his head. Their lips will laugh with the olden evening voices.

From " *Plays of Gods and Men*," by LORD DUNSANY.

IRISH MEMORIES

INTRODUCTORY

PERHAPS I ought to begin by saying that I have always called her "Martin"; I propose to do so still. I cannot think of her by any other name. To her own family, and to certain of her friends, she is Violet; to many others she is best known as Martin Ross. But I shall write of her as I think of her.

* * * * *

When we first met each other we were, as we then thought, well stricken in years. That is to say, she was a little over twenty, and I was four years older than she. Not absolutely the earliest morning of life; say, about half-past ten o'clock, with breakfast (and all traces of bread and butter) cleared away.

We have said to each other at intervals since then that some day we should have to write our memoirs; I even went so far as to prepare an illustration—I have it still—of our probable appearances in the year 1920. (And the forecast was not a flattering one.) Well, 1920 has not arrived yet, but it has moved into the circle of possibilities; 1917 has come, and Martin has gone, and I am left alone to write the memoirs, with such a feeling of inadequacy as does not often, I hope, beset the historian.

These vagrant memories do not pretend to regard

themselves as biography, autobiography, as anything serious or valuable. Martin and I were not accustomed to take ourselves seriously, and if what I may remember has any value, it will be the value that there must be in a record, however unworthy, of so rare and sunny a spirit as hers, and also, perhaps, in the preservation of a phase of Irish life that is fast disappearing. I will not attempt any plan of the path that I propose to follow. I must trust to the caprice of memory, supplemented by the diaries that we have kept with the intermittent conscientiousness proper to such. To keep a diary, in any degree, implies a certain share of industry, of persistence, even of imagination. Let us leave it at that. The diaries will not be brought into court.

* * * * *

CHAPTER I

THE MARTINS OF ROSS

A FEW years ago Martin wrote an account of her eldest brother, Robert, known and loved by a very wide circle outside his own family as "Ballyhooley." He died in September, 1905, and in the following spring, one of his many friends, Sir Henniker Heaton, wrote to my cousin and begged her to help him in compiling a book that should be a memorial of Robert, of his life, his writings, and of his very distinguished and valuable political work as a speaker and writer in the Unionist cause. Sir Henniker Heaton died, and the project unfortunately fell through, but not before my cousin had written an account of Robert, and, incidentally, a history of Ross and the Martins which is in itself so interesting, and that, indirectly, accounts for so many of her own characteristics, that, although much that she had meant to write remains unaccomplished, I propose, unfinished though it is, to make it the foremost chapter in these idle and straying recollections.

AN ACCOUNT OF ROBERT JASPER MARTIN, OF ROSS. BY "MARTIN ROSS"

PART I

MY brother Robert's life began with the epoch that has changed the face and the heart of Ireland. It

ended untimely, in strange accord with the close of that epoch; the ship has sunk, and he has gone down with it.

He was born on June 17th, 1846, the first year of the Irish famine, when Ireland brimmed with a potato-fed population, and had not as yet discovered America. The quietness of untroubled centuries lay like a spell on Connemara, the country of his ancestors; the old ways of life were unquestioned at Ross, and my father went and came among his people in an intimacy as native as the soft air they breathed. On the crowded estate the old routine of potato planting and turf cutting was pursued tranquilly; the people intermarried and subdivided their holdings; few could read, and many could not speak English. All were known to the Master, and he was known and understood by them, as the old Galway people knew and understood; and the subdivisions of the land were permitted, and the arrears of rent were given time, or taken in boat-loads of turf, or worked off by day-labour, and eviction was unheard of. It was give and take, with the personal element always warm in it: as a system it was probably quite uneconomic, but the hand of affection held it together, and the tradition of centuries was at its back.

The intimate relations of landlord and tenant were an old story at Ross. It was in the days of Queen Elizabeth that they began, when the Anglo-Norman families, known as the Tribes of Galway, still in the high summer of their singular and romantic prosperity, began to contemplate existence as being possible outside the walls of Galway Town, and by purchase or by conquest acquired many lands in the county. They had lived for three or four centuries in the town, self-sufficing, clannish and rich; they did not forget the days of Strong-Bow, who, in the time of Henry II,

began the settlement of Galway, nor yet the leadership of De Burgho, and they maintained their isolation, and married and intermarried in inveterate exclusiveness, until, in the time of Henry VIII, relationship was so close and intricate that marriages were not easy. They rang the changes on Christian names, Nicholas, Dominick, Robert, Andrew; they built great houses of the grey Galway limestone, with the Spanish courtyards and deep archways that they learned from their intercourse with Spain, and they carved their coats of arms upon them in that indomitable family pride that is an asset of immense value in the history of a country. Even now, the shop-fronts of Galway carry the symbols of chivalry above their doors, and battered shields and quarterings look strangely down from their places in the ancient walls upon the customers that pass in beneath them.

It was in the sixteenth century that Robert Martin, one of the long and powerful line of High Sheriffs and Mayors of Galway, became possessed of a large amount of land in West Galway, and in 1590 Ross was his country place. From this point the Martins began slowly to assimilate West Galway; Ross, Dangan, Birch Hall, and Ballinahinch, marked their progress, until Ballinahinch, youngest and greatest of the family strongholds, had gathered to itself nearly 200,000 acres of Connemara. It fell, tragically, from the hand of its last owner, Mary Martin, Princess of Connemara, in the time of the Famine, and that page of Martin history is closed in Galway, though the descendants of her grandfather, "Humanity Dick" (for ever to be had in honourable remembrance as the author of "Martin's Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals"), have kept alive the old name of Ballinahinch, and have opened a new and notable record for themselves in Canada.

Of Dangan, the postern gate by the Galway river remains; of Birch Hall, the ruins of a courtyard and of a manorial dove-cot; Ross, the first outpost, nurse of many generations of Martins, still stands by its lake and looks across it to its old neighbour, the brown mountain, Croagh Keenan.

Through a line of Jaspers, Nicholases and Roberts, the story of Ross moved prosperously on from Robert of Elizabeth's times, untouched even by the hand of Cromwell, unshaken even when the gates of Galway, twelve miles away, opened at length to Ireton. Beyond the town of Galway, the Cromwellian did not set his foot; Connemara was a dark and barren country, and the Martins, Roman Catholic and Royalists to the core, as were all the other Tribes of Galway, held the key of the road.

From that conflict Ross emerged, minus most of its possessions in Galway town and suburbs; after the Restoration they were restored by the Decree of Charles II, but remained nevertheless in the hands of those to whom they had been apportioned as spoil. The many links that had bound Ross to Galway Town seem thenceforward to have been severed; during the eighteenth century the life of its owners was that of their surroundings, peaceful for the most part, and intricately bound up with that of their tenants. They were still Roman Catholic and Jacobite—a kinsman of Dangan was an agent for Charles Edward—and each generation provided several priests for its Church. With my great-grandfather, Nicholas, came the change of creed; he became a Protestant in order to marry a Protestant neighbour, Miss Elizabeth O'Hara, of Lenaboy; where an affair of the heart was concerned, he was not the man to stick at what he perhaps considered to be a trifle. It is said that at the end of his long life his early training asserted itself, and drew him

again towards the Church of his fathers; it is certainly probable that he died, as he was born, a son of Rome.

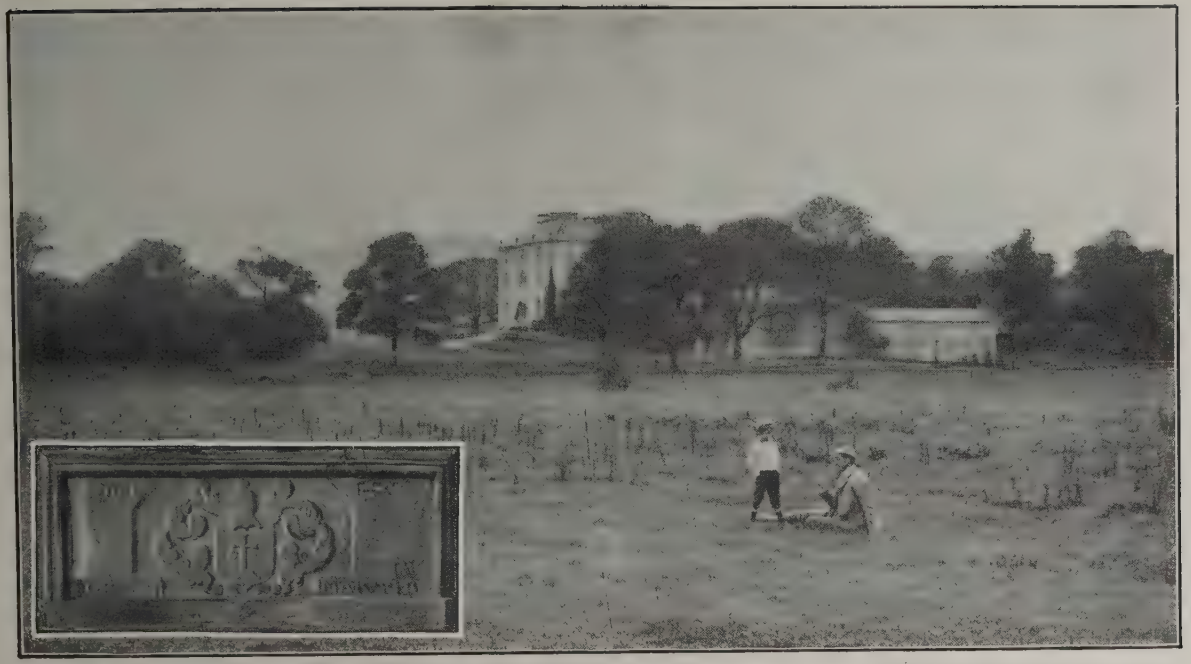
But the die had been cast. His six children were born and bred Protestants. Strong in all ways, they were strong Protestants, and Low Church, according to the fashion of their time, yet they lived in an entirely Roman Catholic district without religious friction of any kind.

It was during the life of Nicholas, my great-grandfather, that Ross House was burned down; with much loss, it is believed, of plate and pictures; it had a tower, and stood beautifully on a point in the lake. He replaced it by the present house, built about the year 1777, whose architecture is not æsthetically to his credit; it is a tall, unlovely block, of great solidity, with kitchen premises half underground, and the whole surrounded by a wide and deep area. It suggests the idea of defence, which was probably not absent from the builder's mind, yet the Rebellion of twenty years later did not put it to the test. In the great storm of 1839, still known as "The Big Wind," my grandfather gathered the whole household into the kitchen for safety, and, looking up at its heavily-vaulted ceiling, said that if Ross fell, not a house in Ireland would stand that night. Many fell, but Ross House stood the assault, even though the lawn was white with the spray borne in from the Atlantic, six miles away. It has at least two fine rooms, a lofty well-staircase, with balusters of mahogany, taken out of a wreck, and it takes all day the sun into its heart, looking west and south, with tall windows, over lake and mountain. It is said that a man is never in love till he is in love with a plain woman, and in spite of draughts, of exhausting flights of stairs, of chimneys that are the despair of sweeps, it has held the affection of five generations of Martins.

A dark limestone slab, over the dining-room chimney-piece, bears the coat of arms—" a Calvary Cross, between the Sun in splendour on the dexter limb, and the Moon in crescent on the sinister of the second "—to quote the official description. The crest is a six-pointed star, and the motto, " Sic itur ad astra," connects with the single-minded simplicity of the Crusader, the Cross of our faith with the Star of our hope. In the book of pedigrees at Dublin Castle it is stated that the arms were given by Richard Cœur de Lion to Oliver Martin, in the Holy Land ; a further family tradition says that Oliver Martin shared Richard's captivity in Austria. The stone on which the arms are carved came originally from an old house in Galway ; it has the name of Robuck Martin below, and the date 1649 above. It is one of several now lying at Ross, resembling the lintels of doorways, and engraved with the arms of various Martins and their wives.

The Protestantism of my grandfather, Robert, did not deter him from marrying a Roman Catholic, Miss Mary Ann Blakeney, of Bally Ellen, Co. Carlow, one of three beauties known in Carlow and Waterford as " The Three Marys." As in most of the acts of his prudent and long-headed life, he did not do wrong. Her four children were brought up as Protestants, but the rites of her Church were celebrated at Ross without let or hindrance ; my brother Robert could remember listening at the drawing-room door to the chanting of the Mass inside, and prayers were held daily by her for the servants, all of whom, then as now, were Roman Catholics.

" Hadn't I the divil's own luck," groaned a stable-boy, stuffing his pipe into his pocket as the prayer-bell clanged, " that I didn't tell the Misthress I was a Protestant ! "



ROSS HOUSE, CO. GALWAY.

(Inset) The Martin Coat of Arms.

She lived till 1855, a hale, quiet, and singularly handsome woman, possessed of the fortunate gift of living in amity under the same roof with the many and various relations-in-law who regarded Ross as their home. Family feeling was almost a religious tenet with my grandfather, and in this, as in other things, he lived up to his theories. Shrewd and patient, and absolutely proficient in the affairs of his property, he could take a long look ahead, even when the Irish Famine lay like a black fog upon all things; and when he gave up his management of the estate there was not a debt upon it. One of his sayings is so unexpected in a man of his time as to be worth repeating. "If a man kicks me I suppose I must take notice of that," he said when reminded of some fancied affront to himself, "short of that, we needn't trouble ourselves about it." He had the family liking for a horse; it is recorded that in a dealer's yard in Dublin he mounted a refractory animal, in his frock coat and tall hat, got him out of the yard, and took him round St. Stephen's Green at a gallop, through the traffic, laying into him with his umbrella. He was once, in Dublin, induced to go to an oratorio, and bore it for some time in silence, till the choir reiterated the theme, "Go forth, ye sons of Aaron! Go!" "Begad, here goes!" said my grandfather, rising and leaving the hall.

My father, James, was born in 1804, and grew up endowed, as many still testify, with good looks and the peculiarly genial and polished manner that seemed to be an attribute of the Galway gentlemen of his time. He had also a gift with his pen that was afterwards to serve him well, but the business capacity of his father was strangely absent from the character of an otherwise able man. He took his degree at Trinity College, Dublin, and was intended for the Bar, but

almost before his dinners were eaten he was immersed in other affairs. He was but little over twenty when he married Miss Anne Higinbotham. It was a very happy marriage; he and his wife, and the four daughters who were born to them, lived in his father's house at Ross, according to the patriarchal custom of the time, and my father abandoned the Bar, and lived then, as always, the healthy country life that he delighted in. He shot woodcock with the skill that was essential in the days of muzzle-loaders, and pulled a good oar in his father's boat at the regattas of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask, as various silver cups still testify. I remember seeing him, a straight and spare man, well on in his sixth decade, take a racing spin with my brothers on Ross Lake, and though his stroke was pronounced by the younger generation to be old-fashioned, and a trifle stiff, he held his own with them. Robert has often told me that when they walked the grouse mountains together, his father could, at the end of the day, face a hill better than he, with all his equipment of youth and athleticism.

Among the silver cups at Ross was a two-handled one, that often fascinated our childhood, with the inscription:

"FROM HENRY ADAIR OF LOUGHANMORE, TO JAMES MARTIN OF ROSS."

It was given to my father in memory of a duel in which he had acted as second, to Henry Adair, who was a kinsman of his first wife.

My father's first wife had no son; she died at the birth of a daughter, and her loss was deep and grievous to her husband. Her four daughters grew up, very good-looking and very agreeable, and were married when still in their teens. Their husbands all came from the County Antrim, and two of them were

brothers. Barklie, Callwell, McCalmont, Barton, are well-known names in Ireland to-day, and beyond it, and the children of his four elder sisters are bound to my brother Robert's life by links of long intimacy and profound affection.

The aim of the foregoing *résumé* of family history has been to put forward only such things as seem to have been determining in the environment and heritage to which Robert was born. The chivalrous past of Galway, the close intimacy with the people, the loyalty to family ties, were the traditions among which he was bred; the Protestant instinct, and a tolerance for the sister religion, born of sympathy and personal respect, had preceded him for two generations, and a store of shrewd humour and common sense had been laid by in the family for the younger generation to profit by if they wished.

My father was a widower of forty when he first met his second wife, Miss Anna Selina Fox, in Dublin. She was then two and twenty, a slender girl, of the type known in those days as elegant, and with a mind divided in allegiance between outdoor amusements and the Latin poets. Her father, Charles Fox, of New Park, Co. Longford, was a barrister, and was son of Justice Fox, of the Court of Common Pleas. He married Katherine, daughter of Chief Justice Bushe, and died while still a young man; his children were brought up at Kilmurrey, the house of their mother's father.

The career of the Right Honourable Charles Kendal Bushe, Chief Justice of Ireland, is a public one, and need not here be dwelt upon; but even at this distance of time it thrills the hearts of his descendants to remember his lofty indifference to every voice save those of conscience and patriotism, when, in the Irish House of Commons, he opposed the Act of Union with all the noble gift of language that won for him

the name "Silver-tongued Bushe," and left the walls ringing with the reiterated entreaty, "I ask you, gentlemen, will you give up your country!"

His attitude then and afterwards cost him the peerage that would otherwise have been his; but above the accident of distinction, and beyond all gainsaying, is the fact that in the list of influential Irishmen made before the Union, with their probable prices (as supporters of the Act) set over against them, the one word following the name of Charles Kendal Bushe is "Incorruptible."

His private life rang true to his public utterances; culture and charm, and a swift and delightful wit, made his memory a fetish to those who lived under his roof. My mother's early life moved as if to the music of a minuet. She learned Latin with a tutor, she studied the guitar, she sat in the old-fashioned drawing-room at Kilmurrey while "The Chief" read aloud Shakespeare, or the latest novel of Sir Walter Scott; she wrote, at eight years old, verses of smooth and virtuous precocity; at seventeen she translated into creditable verse, in the metre beloved of Pope, a Latin poem by Lord Wellesley, the then Viceroy, and received from him a volume in which it was included, with an inscription no less stately than the binding. In her outdoor life she was what, in those decorous days, was called a "Tomboy," and the physical courage of her youth remained her distinguishing characteristic through life. Like the lilies of the field, she toiled not, neither did she spin, yet I have never known a more feminine character.

It was from her that her eldest son derived the highly strung temperament, the unconscious keenness of observation that was only stimulated by the short sight common to them both, the gift of rapid versify-

ing, and a deftness and brilliance in epigram and repartee that came to both in lineal descent from "The Chief." An instance of Robert's quickness in retort occurs to me, and I will give it here. It happened that he was being examined in a land case connected with Ross. The solicitor for the other side objected to the evidence that he gave, as relating to affairs that occurred before he was born, and described it as "hearsay evidence."

"Well, for the matter of that, the fact that I was born is one that I have only on hearsay evidence!" said Robert unanswerably.

My mother first met my father at the house of her uncle, Mr. Arthur Bushe, in Dublin. She met him again at a ball given by Kildare Street Club; they had in common the love of the classics and the love of outdoor life; his handsome face, his attractiveness, have been so often dwelt on by those who knew him at that time, that the mention of them here may be forgiven. In March, 1844, they were married in Dublin, and a month later their carriage was met a couple of miles from Ross by the tenants, and was drawn home by them, while the bonfires blazed at the gates and at the hall door, and the bagpipes squealed their welcome. Bringing with her a great deal of energy, both social and literary, a kicking pony, and a profound ignorance of household affairs, my mother entered upon her long career at Ross. That her sister-in-law, Marian Martin, held the reins of office was fortunate for all that composite establishment; when, later on, my mother took them in her delicate, impatient hands, she held the strictly logical conviction that a sheep possessed four "legs of mutton," and she has shown me a rustic seat, hidden deep in laurels, where she was wont to hide when, as she said, "they came to look for me, to ask what was to be for the servants' dinner."

LIBRARY
COLLEGE

For the first year of her married life tranquillity reigned in house and estate; a daughter was born, and was accepted with fortitude by an establishment already well equipped in that respect. But a darker possibility than the want of an heir arose suddenly and engrossed all minds.

In July, 1845, my father drove to the Assizes in Galway, twelve and a half English miles away, and as he drove he looked with a knowledgeable eye at the plots of potatoes lying thick and green on either side of the road, and thought that he had seldom seen a richer crop. He slept in Galway that night, and next day as he drove home the smell of the potato-blight was heavy in the air, a new and nauseous smell. It was the first breath of the Irish famine. The succeeding months brought the catastrophe, somewhat limited in that first winter, a blow to startle, even to stun, but not a death-stroke. Optimistically the people flung their thoughts forward to the next crop, and bore the pinch of the winter with spasmodic and mismanaged help from the Government, with help, lesser in degree, but more direct, from their landlords.

In was in the following summer of stress and hope that my brother Robert was born, in Dublin, the first son in the Martin family for forty-two years, and the welcome accorded to him was what might have been expected. The doctor was kissed by every woman in the house, so he assured my brother many years afterwards, and, late at night as it was, my father went down to Kildare Street Club to find some friend to whom he could tell the news (and there is a touch of appropriateness in the fact that the Club, that for so many years was a home for Robert, had the first news of his birth).

Radiant with her achievement my mother posted

over the long roads to Ross, in the summer weather, with her precious first-born son, and the welcome of Ross was poured forth upon her. The workmen in the yard kissed the baby's hands, the old women came from the mountains to prophesy and to bless and to perform the dreadful rite of spitting upon the child, for luck. My father's mother, honourable as was her wont towards her husband's and son's religion, asked my mother if a little holy water might be sprinkled on the baby.

" If you heat it you may give him a bath in it ! " replied the baby's mother, with irrepressible light-heartedness.

It may be taken for granted that he received, as we all did, secret baptism at the hands of the priest. It was a kindly precaution taken by our foster mothers, who were, it is needless to say, Roman Catholics ; it gave them peace of mind in the matter of the foster children whom they worshipped, and my father and mother made no inquiries. Their Low Church training did not interfere with their common sense, nor did it blind them to the devotion that craved for the safeguard.

A month or two later the cold fear for the safety of the potatoes fell again upon the people ; the paralysing certainty followed. The green stalks blackened, the potatoes turned to black slime, and the avalanche of starvation, fever and death fell upon the country. It was in the winter of 1847, " the black '47," as they called it, when Robert was in his second year, that the horror was at its worst, and before hope had kindled again his ears must have known with their first understanding the weak voice of hunger and the moan of illness among the despairing creatures who flocked for aid into the yard and the long downstairs passages of Ross. Many stories of that time remain among

the old tenants; of the corpses buried where they fell by the roadside, near Ross Gate; of the coffins made of loose boards tied round with a hay rope. None, perhaps, is more pitiful than that of a woman who walked fifteen miles across a desolate moor, with a child in her arms and a child by her side, to get the relief that she heard was to be had at Ross. Before she reached the house the child in her arms was dead; she carried it into the kitchen and sank on the flags. When my aunt spoke to her she found that she had gone mad; reason had stopped in that whelming hour, like the watch of a drowned man.

A soup-kitchen was established by my father and mother at one of the gates of Ross; the cattle that the people could not feed were bought from them, and boiled down, and the gates were locked to keep back the crowd that pressed for the ration. Without rents, with poor rate at 22*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, the household of Ross staggered through the intimidating years, with the starving tenants hanging, as it were, upon its skirts, impossible to feed, impossible to see unfed. The rapid pens of my father and mother sent the story far; some of the great tide of help that flowed into Ireland came to them; the English Quakers loaded a ship with provisions and sent them to Galway Bay. Hunger was in some degree dealt with, but the Famine fever remained undefeated. My aunt, Marian Martin (afterwards Mrs. Arthur Bushe), caught it in a school that she had got together on the estate, where she herself taught little girls to read and write and knit, and kept them alive with breakfasts of oatmeal porridge. My aunt has told me how, as she lay in the blind trance of the fever, my grandfather, who believed implicitly in his own medical skill, opened a vein in her arm and bled her. The relief, according to her account, was instant and exquisite, and her recovery

set in from that hour. She may have owed much to the determination of the Martins of that period that they would not be ill. My mother, herself a daring rebel against the thraldom of illness, used to say that at Ross no one was ill till they were dead, and no one was dead till they were buried. It was the Christian Science of a tough-grained generation.

The little girls whom my aunt taught are old women now, courteous in manner, cultivated in speech, thanks to the education that was given them when National Schools were not.

Our kinsman, Thomas Martin of Ballinahinch, fell a victim to the Famine fever, caught in the Courthouse while discharging his duties as a magistrate. He was buried in Galway, forty miles by road from Ballinahinch, and his funeral, followed by his tenants, was two hours in passing Ross Gate. In the words of A. M. Sullivan, "No adequate tribute has ever been paid to those Irish landlords—and they were men of every party and creed—who perished, martyrs to duty, in that awful time; who did not fly the plague-reeking workhouse, or fever-tainted court." Amongst them he singled out for mention Mr. Martin of Ballinahinch, and Mr. Nolan of Ballinderry (father of Colonel Nolan, M.P.), the latter of whom died of typhus caught in Tuam Workhouse.

When Robert was three years old, the new seed potatoes began to resist the blight; he was nearly seven before the victory was complete, and by that time the cards that he must play had already been dealt to him.

Part II

The Famine yielded like the ice of the Northern Seas; it ran like melted snows in the veins of Ireland for many years afterwards. Landlords who had es-

caped ruin at the time were more slowly ruined as time went on and the money borrowed in the hour of need exacted its toll; Ross held its ground, with what stress its owners best knew. It was in those difficult years of Robert's boyhood, when yet more brothers and sisters continued to arrive rapidly, that his father began to write for the Press. He contributed leading articles to the *Morning Herald*, a London paper, now extinct; he went to London and lived the life that the writing of leading articles entails, with its long waiting for the telegrams, and its small-hour suppers, and it told on the health of a man whose heart had been left behind him in the West. It tided over the evil time, it brought him into notice with the Conservative Party and the Irish Government, and probably gained for him subsequently his appointment of Poor Law Auditor.

His style in writing is quite unlike that of his eldest son; it is more rigid, less flowing; the sentences are short and pointed, evidently modelled on the rhythmic hammer-stroke of Macaulay; it has not the careless and sunshiny ease with which Robert achieved his best at the first attempt. That facility and versification that is akin to the gift of music, and, like it, is inborn, came from my mother, and came to him alone of his eight brothers and sisters; in her letters to her children she dropped into doggerel verse without an effort, rhymes and metres were in her blood, and to the last year of her life she never failed to criticise occasional and quite insignificant roughnesses in her son's poems. Of her own polished and musical style one verse in illustration may be given.

"In the fond visions of the silent night,
I dreamt thy love, thy long sought love, was won;
Was it a dream, that vision of delight—?
I woke; 'twas but a dream, let me dream on!"

Robert was a nervous, warm-hearted boy, dark-eyed and romantic-looking; the sensitive nature that expanded to affection was always his, and made him cling to those who were kind to him. The vigorous and outdoor life of Ross was the best tonic for such a nature, the large and healthful intimacy with lake and woods, bog and wild weather, and shooting and rowing, learned unconsciously from a father who delighted in them, and a mother who knew no fear for herself and had little for her children. Everything in those early days of his was large and vigorous; tall trees to climb, great winds across the lake to wrestle with, strenuous and capable talk upstairs and downstairs, in front of furnaces of turf and logs, long drives, and the big Galway welcome at the end of them. One day was like another, yet no day was monotonous. Prayers followed breakfast, long prayers, beginning with the Psalms, of which each child read a verse in due order of seniority; then First and Second Lessons, frequently a chapter from a religious treatise, finally a prayer, from a work named "The Tent and Altar," all read with excellent emphasis by the master of the house. In later years, after Robert had matriculated at Trinity College, I remember with what youthful austerity he read prayers at Ross, and with what awe we saw him reject "The Tent and Altar" and heard him recite from memory the Morning Prayers from the Church Service. He was at the same time deputed to teach Old Testament history to his brothers and sisters; to this hour the Judges of Israel are painfully stamped on my brain, as is the tearful morning when the Bible was hurled at my inattentive head by the hand of the remorseless elder brother.

Robert's early schoolroom work at Ross was got through with the ease that may be imagined by anyone who has known his quickness in assimilating

ideas and his cast-iron memory. As was the case with all the Ross children, the real interests of the day were with the workmen and the animals. The agreeability of the Galway peasant was enthralling; even to a child; the dogs were held in even higher esteem. Throughout Robert's life dogs knew him as their friend; skilled in the lore of the affections, they recognised his gentle heart, and the devotion to him of his Gordon setter, Rose, is a thing to remember. Even of late years I have seen him hurry away when his sterner sisters thought it necessary to chastise an offending dog; the suffering of others was almost too keenly understood by him.

Reading aloud rounded off the close of those early days at Ross, Shakespeare and Walter Scott, Napier and Miss Edgeworth; the foundation of literary culture was well and truly laid, and laid with respect and enthusiasm, so that what the boy's mind did not grasp was stored up for his later understanding, among things to be venerated, and fine diction and choice phrase were imprinted upon an ear that was ever retentive of music. Everyone who remembers his childhood remembers him singing songs and playing the piano. His ear was singularly quick, and I think it was impossible for him to sing out of tune. He learned his notes in the schoolroom, but his musical education was dropped when he went to school, as is frequently the case; throughout his life he accompanied himself on the piano by ear, with ease, if with limitations; simple as the accompaniments were, there was never a false note, and it seemed as if his hands fell on the right places without an effort.

A strange feature in his early education and in the establishment at Ross was James Tucker, an ex-hedge schoolmaster, whose long face, blue shaven chin, shabby black clothes, and gift for poetry have passed

inextricably into the annals of the household. He entered it first at the time of the Famine, ostensibly to give temporary help in the management and accounts of the school which my aunt Marian had started for the tenants' children; he remained for many years, and filled many important posts. He taught us the three R's with rigour and perseverance, he wrote odes for our birthdays, he was controller-in-chief of the dairy; later on, when my father received the appointment of Auditor of Poor Law, under the Local Government Board, Tucker filled in the blue "abstracts" of the Auditor's work in admirably neat columns. Robert's recital of the multiplication table was often interrupted by wails for "Misther Tucker" and the key of the dairy, from the kitchen-maid at the foot of the schoolroom stairs, and the interruption was freely cursed, in a vindictive whisper, by the schoolmaster. Tucker was slightly eccentric, a feature for which there was always toleration and room at Ross; he entered largely into the schoolroom theatricals that sprang up as soon as Robert was old enough to whip up a company from the ranks of his brothers and sisters. The first of which there is any record is the tragedy of "Bluebeard," adapted by him at the age of eight. As the author did not feel equal to writing it down, it was taught to the actors by word of mouth, he himself taking the title *rôle*. The performance took place privately in the schoolroom, an apartment discreetly placed by the authorities in a wing known as "The Offices," beyond ken or call of the house proper. Tucker was stage manager, every servant in the house was commandeered as audience. The play met with much acceptance up to the point when Bluebeard dragged Fatima (a shrieking sister) round the room by her hair, belabouring her with a wooden sword, amid the ecstatic

yells of the spectators, but at this juncture the mistress of the house interrupted the revels with paralysing suddenness. She had in vain rung the drawing-room bell for tea, she had searched and found the house mysteriously silent and empty, till the plaudits of the rescue scene drew her to the school-room. Players and audience broke into rout, and Robert's first dramatic enterprise ended in disorder, and, if I mistake not, for the principals, untimely bed.

It was some years afterwards, when Robert was at Trinity, that a similar effort on his part of missionary culture ended in a like disaster. He became filled with the idea of getting up a cricket team at Ross, and in a summer vacation he collected his eleven, taught them to hold a bat, and harangued them eloquently on the laws of the game. It was unfortunate that its rules became mixed up in the minds of the players with a game of their own, called "Burnt Ball," which closely resembles "Rounders," and is played with a large, soft ball. In the first day of cricket things progressed slowly, and the unconverted might have been forgiven for finding the entertainment a trifle dull. A batsman at length hit a ball and ran. It was fielded by cover-point, who, bored by long inaction, had waited impatiently for his chance. In the enthusiasm of at length getting something to do, the recently learned laws of cricket were swept from the mind of cover-point, and the rules of Burnt Ball instantly reasserted themselves. He hurled the ball at the batsman, shouting: "Go out! You're burnt!" and smote him heavily on the head.

The batsman went out, that is to say, he picked himself up and tottered from the fire zone. and neither then nor subsequently did cricket prosper at Ross.

Then, and always, Robert shared his enthusiasm with others; he gave himself to his surroundings, whether people or things, and, as afterwards, it was preferably people. He had the gift of living in the present and living every moment of it; it might have been of him that Carlyle said, "Happy men live in the present, for its bounty suffices, and wise men too, for they know its value."

Throughout Robert's school and college days theatricals, charades, and living pictures, written or arranged by him, continued to flourish at Ross. There remains in my memory a play, got up by him when he was about seventeen, in which he himself, despising the powers of his sisters, took the part of the heroine, with the invaluable Tucker as the lover. A tarletan dress was commandeered from the largest of the sisterhood, and in it, at the crisis of the play, he endeavoured to elope with Tucker over a clothes-horse, draped in a curtain. It was at this point that the tarletan dress, tried beyond its strength, split down the back from neck to waist; the heroine flung her lover from her, and backed off the stage with her front turned firmly to the audience, and the elopement was deferred *sine die.*

Those were light-hearted days, yet they were indelible in Robert's memory, and the strength and savour of the old Galway times were in them as inextricably as the smell of the turf smoke and the bog myrtle. Nothing was conventional or stagnant, things were done on the spur of the moment, and with a total disregard for pomps and vanities, and everyone preferred good fun to a punctual dinner. Mingling with all were the poor people, with their cleverness, their good manners, and their unflagging spirits; I can see before me the carpenter painting a boat by the old boat quay, and Robert sitting on a rock, and

talking to him for long tracts of the hot afternoon. At another time one could see Robert holding, with the utmost zeal and discrimination, a court of arbitration in the coach-house for the settling of an intricate and vociferous dispute between two of the tenants.

Life at Ross was of the traditional Irish kind, with many retainers at low wages, which works out as a costly establishment with nothing to show for it. A sheep a week and a cow a month were supplied by the farm, and assimilated by the household; it seemed as if with the farm produce, the abundance of dairy cows, the packed turf house, the fallen timber ready to be cut up, the fruitful garden, the game and the trout, there should have been affluence. But after all these followed the Saturday night labour bill, and the fact remains, as many Irish landlords can testify, that these free fruits of the earth are heavily paid for, that convenience is mistaken for economy, and that farming is, for the average gentleman, more of an occupation than an income.

The Famine had left its legacy of debt and a lowered rental, and further hindrances to the financial success of farm and estate were the preoccupation of my father's life with his work as Auditor of Poor Law Unions, the enormous household waste that took toll of everything, and, last and most inveterate of all, my father's generous and soft-hearted disposition.

One instance will give, in a few sentences, the relation between landlord and tenant, which, as it would seem, all recent legislation has sedulously schemed to destroy. I give it in the words of one of the tenants, widow of an eye-witness.

"The widow A., down by the lake-side" (Lough

Corrib—about three miles away), " was very poor one time, and she was a good while in arrears with her rent. The Master sent to her two or three times, and in the end he walked down himself after his breakfast, and he took Thady " (the steward) " with him. Well, when he went into the house, she was so proud to see him, and ' Your Honour is welcome ! ' says she, and she put a chair for him. He didn't sit down at all, but he was standing up there with his back to the dresser, and the children were sitting down one side the fire. The tears came from the Master's eyes ; Thady seen them fall down the cheek. ' Say no more about the rent,' says the Master, to her, ' you need say no more about it till I come to you again.' Well, it was the next winter the men were working in Gurthnamuckla, and Thady with them, and the Master came to the wall of the field and a letter in his hand, and he called Thady over to him. What had he to show him but the Widow A.'s rent that her brother in America sent her ! "

It will not happen again ; it belongs to an almost forgotten *régime*, that was capable of abuse, yet capable too of summoning forth the best impulses of Irish hearts. The end of that *régime* was not far away, and the beginning of the end was already on the horizon of Ross.

My grandfather, whose peculiar capacity might once have saved the financial situation, had fallen into a species of second childhood. He died at Ross, and I remember the cold thrill of terror with which I heard him "keened" by an old tenant, a widow, who asked permission to see him as he lay dead. She went into the twilit room, and suddenly the tremendous and sustained wail went through the house, like the voice of the grave itself.

It seemed as if Ross had borne a charmed life

during the troubles of the later 'sixties. The Fenian rising of 1867 did not touch it; the flicker of it was like sheet lightning in the Eastern sky, but the storm passed almost unheard. It had been so in previous risings; Ross seemed to be geographically intended for peace. It is bounded on the east by the long waters of Lough Corrib, on the west by barren mountains, stretching to the Atlantic, on the north by the great silences of Connemara. Within these boundaries the mutual dependence of landlord and tenant remained unshaken; it was a delicate relation, almost akin to matrimony, and like a happy marriage, it needed that both sides should be good fellows. The Disestablishment of the Irish Church came in 1869, a direct blow at Protestantism, and an equally direct tax upon landlords for the support of their Church, but of this revolution the tenants appeared to be unaware. In 1870 came Gladstone's Land Act, which by a system of fines shielded the tenant to a great extent from "capricious eviction." As evictions, capricious or otherwise, did not occur at Ross, this section of the Act was not of epoch-making importance there; its other provision, by which tenants became proprietors of their own improvements, was also something of a superfluity. It was 1872 that brought the first cold plunge into Irish politics of the new kind.

In February of that year Captain Trench, son of Lord Clancarty, contested one of the divisions of County Galway in the Conservative interest, his opponent being Captain Nolan, a Home Ruler. It went without saying that my father gave his support to the Conservative, who was also a Galway man, and the son of a friend. Up to that time it was a matter of course that the Ross tenants voted with their landlord. Captain Trench canvassed the Ross

district, and there was no indication of what was about to happen, or if there were, my father did not believe it. The polling place for that part of the country was in Oughterard, about five miles away; my father drove there on the election day, and on the hill above the town was met by a man who advised him to turn back. A troop of cavalry glittered in the main street and the crowd seethed about them. My father drove on and saw a company of infantry keeping the way for Mr. Arthur Guinness, afterwards Lord Ardilaun, as he convoyed to the poll a handful of his tenants from Ashford at the other side of Lough Corrib to vote for Captain Trench, he himself walking in front with the oldest of them on his arm. During that morning my father ranged through the crowd incredulously, asking for this or that tenant, unable to believe that they had deserted him. It was a futile search; with a few valiant exceptions the Ross tenants, following the example of the rest of the constituency, voted according to the orders of their Church, and Captain Nolan was elected by a majority of four to one. It was a priest from another part of the diocese who gave forth the mandate, with an extraordinary fury of hatred against the landlord side; one need not blame the sheep who passed in a frightened huddle from one fold to another. When my father came home that afternoon, even the youngest child of the house could see how great had been the blow. It was not the political defeat, severe as that was, it was the personal wound, and it was incurable. A petition against the result of the election brought about the famous trial in Galway, at which Judge Keogh, himself a Roman Catholic, denounced the priestly intimidation that was established in the mouths of many witnesses. The Ballot Act followed in June, but these things could not

soothe the wounded spirit of the men who had trusted in their tenants.

Startlingly, the death of a Galway landlord followed on the election. He was a Roman Catholic, and belonged to one of the oldest families in the county; on his death-bed he desired that not one of his tenants should touch his coffin. It was not in that spirit that my father, a few weeks afterwards, faced the end. In March he caught cold on one of his many journeys of inspection; he was taken ill at the Galway Club, and a slow pleurisy followed. He lay ill for a time in Galway, and the longing for home strengthened with every day.

"If I could hear the cawing of the Ross crows I should get well," he said pitifully.

He was brought home, but he was even then past hope.

Some scenes remain for ever on the memory. In the early afternoon of the 23rd of April, I looked down through the rails of the well-staircase, and saw Robert come upstairs to his father's room, his tall figure almost supported on the shoulder of one of the men. All was then over, and the last of the old order of the Landlords of Ross had gone, murmuring,

"I am ready to meet Thee, Eternal Father!"

Part III

With the death of my father the curtain fell for ever on the old life at Ross, the stage darkened, and the keening of the tenants as they followed his coffin was the last music of the piece.

Two or three months afterwards the house was empty. In the blaze of the June weather, the hall door, that had always stood open, was shut and barred, and, in the stillness, the rabbits ventured up to the

broad limestone steps where once the talk of the house had centred in the summer evenings. For the first time in its history Ross House was empty; my mother and her children had embarked upon life in Dublin, and Robert, like his father before him, had gone to London to write for the Press.

For five or six years Robert lived in London. He belonged to the Arundel Club, where lived and moved the Bohemians of that day, the perfect and single-hearted Bohemians, who were, perhaps, survivals of the days of Richard Steele, and have now vanished, unable to exist in the shadeless glare of Borough Councils. Their literary power was unquestioned, the current of their talk was strong, with baffling swirl and eddy, and he who plunged in it must be a resourceful and strong swimmer. Linked inseparably with those years of London life was my mother's cousin, W. G. Wills, the playwright, poet and painter, who in these early 'seventies had suddenly achieved celebrity as a dramatist, with the tragedy of "Charles I." If a record could be discovered of the hierarchs of the Bohemians it would open of itself at the name of Willie Wills. Great gifts of play-writing and portrait-painting rained upon him a reputation that he never troubled himself about; he remained unalterably himself, and, clad in his long grey ulster, lived in his studio a life unfettered by the clock. Of his amazing *ménage*, of the strange and starveling hangers-on that followed him as rooks follow the plough, to see what they could pick up, all who knew him had stories to tell. Of the luncheons at his studio, where the beefsteak came wrapped in newspaper, and the plates that were hopelessly dirty were thrown out of the window; of the appointments written boldly on the wall and straightway forgotten; the litter of canvases, the scraps of manuscript, and among and

above these incidents, the tranquillity, the charm, the agreeability of Willie Wills.*

Robert has found him and my mother lunching together gloriously on mutton chops, cooked by being flung into the heart of the fire.

"Just one more, Nannie," said the dramatist, as Robert entered, spearing a blazing fragment and presenting it to his boon companion with a courtly gesture.

In the old days at Ross, Willie Wills was a frequent guest, and held the children in thrall—as he could always ensnare and hold children—with his exquisite story-telling. Their natural guardians withdrew with confidence, as Willie began, with enormous gravity, the tale of "The Little Old Woman who lived in the Dark Wood, and had one long yellow Tooth," and, returning after an interval, heard that "at this momentous crisis seven dead men, in sacks, staggered into the room—!" while, in the fateful pause that followed, the clamour of the children, "Go on, Willie Wills!" would rise.

Robert and Willie Wills were in many aspects of character and of gifts unlike, yet with some cousinly points in common. Both were cultivated and literary, yet seldom read a book; both were sensitive to criticism, and even touchingly anxious for approval; both were delightful companions in a *tête-à-tête*. Where sympathy is joined with imagination, and sense of humour with both, it is a combination hard to beat. Robert regarded routine respectfully, if from afar, and sincerely admired the efforts of those who en-

* Robert has told me how, hearing from Willie Wills that "the money-market was tight," he went to proffer assistance. In Willie's studio he was about to light a cigarette with a half-burned "spill" of paper, when he became aware that the "spill" was a five-pound note, an unsuspected relic of more prosperous times, that had already been used for a like purpose. E. Œ. S.

deavoured to systematise his belongings. Willie Wills was superbly indifferent to surroundings, yet took a certain pride in new clothes. The real points of resemblance were in heart; the chivalrous desire to help the weak, and the indelible filial instinct that glows in natures of the best sort, and marks unfailingly a good son as a good fellow through all the nations of the world.

Throughout these London days Robert wrote for the *Globe* and other papers, chiefly paragraphs and light articles, that ran from his pen with the real enjoyment that he found in writing them at the last moment. He seemed to do better when working against time than when he had large days in hand and a well-ordered writing-table inviting his presence. He found these things thoroughly uninspiring, and facilities for correcting his work were odious to him. Proofs he never looked at; he said he couldn't face them; probably because of the critical power that underlay his facility.

London with Robert in it was then, as ever, for Robert's family, a place with a different meaning —a place of theatre tickets, of luncheons, of newspaper news viewed from within, of politics and actors reduced to human personalities. It was a fixed rule that he should meet his female relatives on their arrival at Euston; it is on record that he was once in time, but it is also recorded that on that occasion the train was forty minutes late. The hum of London seasons filled his brain; London may be attractive or repellent, but it will be heard, and it made strong music for a nature that loved the stir of men and the encounter of minds. Four hundred miles away lay Ross in the whispering stillness of its summer woods, and the monotony of its winter winds, producing heavy bags of woodcock

after its kind, while its master " shot folly as she flew," and found his game in the *canards* of Fleet Street and Westminster. It was inevitable as things stood, but in that alienation both missed much that lay in the power of each to give.

It was while Robert was living in London that the resignation of Mr. Gladstone took place. Out of the ensuing general election in the spring of 1873 came Isaac Butt and his lieutenants, with a party of sixty Home Rulers behind them; Ireland had sent them instead of the dozen or so of the previous Parliament, and it was said that Ireland had done it in the new-found shelter of the Ballot Act. Robert knew, as anyone brought up as he was must know, that for most of Ireland the Ballot Act could not be a shelter. The Galway election of 1872 had shown to all in whose hands the great power of the franchise lay. One indefensible position had been replaced by another, feudal power by clerical, and only those who knew Robert well, understood how hard it hit him. He shot at Ross occasionally, he visited it now and then, and at every visit his perceptive nature was aware that a new spirit was abroad; in spite of the genuine and traditional feeling of the people for their old allies, in spite of their good breeding, and their anxious desire to conceal the rift. The separation had begun, and only those who have experienced it will understand how strange, how wounding it is.

It was not universal, and theoretical hostility strove always with the soft voice of memory. My father was still to all, " The Masther, the Lord have mercy on him "; the Martins were still " The Family," who could do no wrong, whose defects, if such were admitted, were revered. " The Martin family hadn't good sight," said a tenant, " but sure the people say that was a proof of their nobility."

There is an incident of one of Robert's visits to Ross that is not too small to be worth recording. He had given his Gordon setter, Rose, to a friend who lived five miles away from Ross, and she had settled down with resignation to her new life. Trained in the language of the drawing-room, she may have heard it said that Robert was at Ross, or her deep and inscrutable perceptions may have received a wave of warning of his nearness. Whatever it was that prompted her, the old dog made her way alone to Ross, and found her master there.

In 1877 Robert turned his steps again to Dublin, and before the year was out he was living with his grandmother, and was immersed in the life, political, theatrical and social, of Dublin.

My mother's mother, Mrs. Fox, was, as has been said, a daughter of Chief Justice Bushe, and was a notable member of a remarkable band of brothers and sisters. Strongly humorous, strongly affectionate, a doughty politician, original in every idea, and delightful in her prejudices; a black letter authority on Shakespeare and Scott, a keen debater upon Carlyle, upon Miss Rhoda Broughton, upon all that was worth reading. I can see her declaiming "Henry IV" to Robert and his brethren, with irrepressible gestures of her hand, with a big voice for Falstaff, and a small voice for Mine Hostess, and an eye that raked the audience lest it should waver in attentiveness. Even as clearly can I see her, as, at a time of crisis,—it was, I think, after Gladstone's attack on Trinity College,—she sprang from her chair, and speechlessly wrung the hand of someone who had rushed into her dining-room, crying,

"Gladstone has resigned!"

That was how she and her family took their politics. She loved Robert with a touching devotion, and I

think those days in Herbert Street were deeply woven into his memory. It was a quiet street, with a long strip of grass and hawthorns, instead of houses, forming one side of it, part of the grounds of the convent that stood at the end. There the birds sang, and a little convent bell spelt out the Angelus with a friendly voice; the old red-brick house, with its old furniture and its old china, the convent bell, with its reminder of cloistered calm, all made a suitable setting for the strictly ordered, cultured life of the old lady who bestowed on them their appropriateness.

In the spring of '78 Robert was in the thick of amateur theatricals. He was never a first-rate actor, but he was a thoroughly reliable one; he always knew his part, though none could say how or when he learned it, he could "gag" with confidence, and dropped on to his cue unerringly, and he had that liking for his audience that is the shortest cut to being on good terms with them. His gift in ready verse was not allowed to remain idle. He wrote prologues, he arranged singing quadrilles; when the Sheridan Club had a guest whom it delighted to honour, it was Robert who wrote and recited the ode for the occasion; an ode that never attempted too much, and just touched the core of the matter.

With the close of the 'seventies came the burst into the open of the Irish Parliamentary Party, in full cry. Like hounds hunting confusedly in covert, they had, in the hands of Isaac Butt, kept up a certain amount of noise and excitement, keen, yet uncertain as to what game was on foot. From 1877 it was Parnell who carried the horn, a grim, disdainful Master, whose pack never dared to get closer to him than the length of his thong; but he laid them on the line, and they ran it like wolves.

Up to 1877 crops and prices were good, even re-

markably so, and rents were paid. Following that year came, like successive blows on the same spot, three bad harvests that culminated in the disastrous season of 1879–80. It was in 1847 that the Famine broke the heart and the life of O'Connell; it was the partial failure of the crop of '79 and '80 that created Parnell's opportunity—so masterful a factor has been the potato in the destinies of Irishmen.

In 1879 the rents began to fail. The distress was not comparable to that of '47, but it brought about a revolution infinitely greater. At its close it left the Irish tenant practically owner of his land, with a rent fixed by Government, and the feudal link with the landlord was broken for ever. On the Ross estate a new agent had inaugurated a new policy, excellent in theory, abhorrent to those whom it concerned, the "striping" of many of the holdings, in order to give to each tenant an equal share of good and bad land. Anyone who knows the Irish tenant will immediately understand what it means to interfere with his land, and, above all things, to give to another tenant any part of it. It was done nevertheless. The long lines of stone wall ran symmetrically parallel over hill and pasture and bog, and the symmetry was hateful and the equality bitter to those most concerned. It is probable that the discontent sank in and prepared the way for the mischief that was coming.

By the winter of 1879 the pinch had become severe. The tenants, by this time two or three years in arrear, did not meet their liabilities, and most landlords went without the greater part of their income. Robert, among many others, began to learn what it was to be deprived of the moderate income left to him after the charges on his estate were paid. He never again received any.

Three Relief Funds in Dublin coped as best they

could with the distress of the Irish poor. One of them was worked with great enthusiasm and organising power by the Duchess of Marlborough, and by every means known to a most capable leader of Society she lured from Society of all grades a ready "rate in aid." Entertainments sprang up—theatricals, bazaars, concerts—that helped the Fund and at the same time put heart into the flagging Dublin season, and Robert was in the thick of charitable endeavour. His first Irish song, the leader of a long line that culminated later in "Ballyhooly," was written at about this time, "The Vagrants of Erin," a swinging tune, that marched to words National enough for any party.

"Give me your hand, if owld Ireland's the land
From which you may chance to be farin',"

it began, with all its author's geniality, and the Irish audience responded to its first chords with drowning applause. Once, as he sang it, accompanying himself, and swinging with the tune, the music stool began to sway in ominous accord. "First it bent, and syne it brake," and Robert staggered to his feet, but just in time.

"This is a pantomime song, with a breakdown in it!" he said, while the head of the stool rolled from its broken stalk and trundled down the stage.

He had the gift of making friends with his audience; as he came on to the platform to sing, his air of enjoyment, his friendly eyes, even his single eyeglass, had already done half the business. He took them, as it were, to his bosom, and whatever might be their grade, he did his best for them. In spite of the liberties he took with time, words and tune, he was singularly easy to accompany, for anyone acquainted with his methods and prepared to cast himself (it was generally herself) adrift with him, and trust to ear instead of

to book. However far afield Robert might range, whatever stories he told, he would surely drop back into the key and the words, like a wild duck into the water, with a just sufficient hint to the waiting coadjutor that his circling flight was ending. His topical songs of those early 'eighties have died, as all of their kind must die. He wrote down nothing, the occasion is forgotten, and the brain in which they had their being has passed from us. One or two points and hits remain with me. In the year that Shotover won the Oaks, a commemorating verse ended :

> " Of course she was Shot over,
> She'd a Cannon on her back ! "

In one of the songs, the explanation of the failure of the ships *Alert* and *Discovery* to reach the North Pole was that " those on the Discovery were not on the Alert."

In spite of the thunderous political background of the early 'eighties, in spite of the empty pockets of those dependent on Irish rents, in spite of the crime that drew forth the Crimes Act, the fun and the spirit were inextinguishable in Dublin.

But the political background was growing blacker, and the thunder more loud. Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 had not pacified Ireland, even though it made the tenant practically owner of his land, even though the rents were fixed by Government officials, whose mission was to coax sedition to complacence, if not to loyalty. Ireland was falling into chaos. Arrears of rent, Relief Committees, No Rent manifestoes, Plan of Campaign evictions, Funds for Distressed Irish Ladies, outrages, boycotting, and Parnell stirring the " Seething Pot " with a steady hand, while his subordinates stoked the fire. Boycotting was responded to by the Property Defence Association, and in 1882

Robert went forth under its auspices as an "Emergency man." His business was to visit the boycotted landlords and farmers and to supply them with men—from the North, for the most part—to do the farm work. Those who do not know Ireland, and for whom the word boycotting has no personal associations, can hardly realise what that dark time meant to its victims. The owners of boycotted lands, unable to get food or necessaries of any kind from the local tradespeople, imported supplies from England and the North, and opened stores in their stable yards for such of the faithful as stood firm. Ladies, totally unaccustomed to outdoor labour, saved crops and herded cattle, matters that in themselves might have been found interesting, if arduous, but the terror was over all, and in face of bitter antagonism the task was too great.

It was at this work that Robert knew, for the first time, what it was to have every man's hand against him, to meet the stare of hatred, the jeer, and the side-long curse; to face endless drives on outside cars, with his revolver in his hand; to plan the uphill tussle with boycotted crops, and cattle for which a market could scarcely be found; to know the imminence of death, when, by accidentally choosing one of two roads, he evaded the man with a gun who had gone out to wait for him. It taught him much of difficult men and of tangled politics, he learned how to make the best of a bad business, and how to fight in a corner; it made him a proficient in Irish affairs, and it added to his opinions a seriousness based on strong and moving points.

Gladstone had faced a dangerous Ireland with concession in one hand and coercion in the other, and however either may go in single harness, there is no doubt that they cannot with success be driven as

a pair. There followed the Maamtrasna murders, the extermination of the Huddy family, the assassination in Phœnix Park of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, the attempted assassination of Judge Lawson opposite Kildare Street Club. When Robert was entering into the deep places of his last illness, he spoke with all his wonted grasp of details of those webs of conspiracy. Tradesmen who came from Dublin to work in Kylemore Castle (then the property of Mr. Mitchell Henry) infected the mind of Northern Connemara with the idea that assassination was a fitting expression of political opinion. The murders of the Maamtrasna district followed. The stately mountains beheld the struggle and the slaughter, and the sweet waters of Lough Mask closed upon the victims.

Month by month the net of conspiracy was woven, and life was the prize played for in wonderful silence and darkness, and murder was achieved like a victory at chess. We know how the victories were paid for. I do not forget the face of Timothy Kelly, as he stood in the dock and was tried for participation in the Phœnix Park murders. There is a pallor of fear that is remembered when once seen, and to see that sick and desperate paleness on the face of a boy of seventeen is to feel for ever the mystery and enormity of his crime, and the equal immensity of the punishment. Unforgettable, too, is the moment when his mother took her seat in the witness chair to support the *alibi* put forward on his behalf, and looked her boy in his white and stricken face, white and stricken as he. Yet she did not waver, and gave her evidence quietly and collectedly.

A phrase or two from the speech for the defence has fixed itself in the memory.

"Take the scales of Justice," said the Counsel,

with a wide gesture of appeal towards the jury; "lift them far above the reach of passion and prejudice, into those serener regions above where Justice herself reigns supreme——"

Death brooded palpably over the brown and grey Court, and held the tense faces of all in his thrall, and weighted every syllable of the speeches. Never was the irrelevancy of murder as a political weapon made more clear, and the fearful appropriateness of capital punishment seemed clear too, mystery requited with mystery.

When we came into the Court we were told that the jury would disagree, there being at least one "Invincible" on the list, and it was so. But with the next trial the end was reached, and the trapped creature in the dock, with the men who were his confederates, went down into the oblivion into which they had thrust their prey.

Many years ago a mission priest delivered a sermon in Irish in the bare white chapel that stands high on a hill above Ross Lake. I remember one sentence, translated for me by one of the congregation.

"Oh black seas of Eternity, without height or depth, bay, brink, or shore! How can anyone look into your depths and neglect the salvation of his soul!"[1]

It expresses all that need now be remembered of the Phœnix Park murders.

* * * * *

[1] This sentence was subsequently introduced in the article "At the River's Edge," by Martin Ross, *The Englishwoman's Review.*

CHAPTER II

"THE CHIEF"

It is a commonplace, even amounting to a bromide, to speak of the breadth, the depth, and the length of the ties of Irish kinship. In Ireland it is not so much Love that hath us in the net as Relationship. Pedigree takes precedence even of politics, and in all affairs that matter it governs unquestioned. It is sufficient to say that the candidate for any post, in any walk of life—is "a cousin of me own, by the Father"—"a sort of a relation o' mine, by the Mother"—and support of the unfittest is condoned, even justified.

I am uncertain if the practice of deifying a relationship by the employment of the definite article is peculiar to Munster, or even to Ireland. "The fawther," "the a'nt." He who speaks to me of my father as "The Fawther," implies a sort of humorous intimacy, a respect just tinged with facetiousness, that is quite lacking in the severe directness of "your father."

There was once a high magnate of a self-satisfied provincial town (its identity is negligible). An exhibition was presently to be held there, and it chanced that a visit from Royalty occurred shortly before the completion of the arrangements. It also chanced that a possible visit to Ireland of a still greater

Personage impended—(this was several years ago). The lesser Royalty partook of lunch with the magnate, and the latter broached the question of a State opening of the exhibition by the august visitor to be.

" When ye go back to London, now," he beguiled, " coax the Brother ! "

How winning is the method of address ! It has in it something of the insidious coquetry of the little dog who skips, in affected artlessness, uninvited, upon your knee.

I have strayed from my text, which was the potency of the net of relationship. Being Irish, I have to acknowledge its spell, and I think it is indisputable that a thread, however slender, of kinship adds a force to friendship.

Martin's mother and mine were first cousins, granddaughters of Chief Justice Charles Kendal Bushe, and of his wife, Anne Crampton. I have heard my mother assert that she had seventy first cousins, all grandchildren of " The Chief," but I think there was a touch of fancy about this. There is something sounding and sumptuous about the number seventy, and some remembrance of Ahab and his seventy relatives may have been in it. In her memoir of her brother Robert, Martin has given some suggestion of the remarkable charm and influence of these great-grandparents of ours. The adoration that both of them inspired distils like a perfume from every record of them. They seem to have obliterated all their rival grandfathers and grandmothers. One reflects that each of the seventy first cousins must have possessed four grandparents, yet, in the radiance of this couple, the alternative grandpapas and grandmammas appear to have been, in the regard of their grandchildren, no more than shadows.

They lived in a strangely interesting time, the time

of the Union, when there was room in the upper classes for each individual to be known to each, and the proportion of those that governed, and those that were governed, was as the players in an international cricket match to the lookers-on ; and it is not too much to boast that, out of a very brilliant team, there was no better innings played than that of Charles Kendal Bushe. When, as in " the '98," the lookers-on attempted to join in the game, the result exemplified their incapacity and the advantages of the existing arrangement.

Martin had been given by her mother a boxful of old family letters ; one of those pathetic collections of letters that no one either wants, or looks at, or feels justified in burning. I know not for how many years they had been hidden away. We had talked, every now and then, of examining them, but the examination had been postponed for a more convenient season that never came. Now life is emptier, and time seems of less value ; I have read them all, and I think that some extracts from them will not come amiss among these memories.

It would require a sounder historian than I, and one who had specialised in Irish affairs of the latter years of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, to deal adequately with these old papers. The Chief Justice and his wife lived intensely, in the very heart of the most intense time, probably, that Ireland has ever known. They knew all the rebel leaders, Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and the rest of the splendid romantics who fought and died, and lit with the white flame of devotion one page at least of Ireland's history. The names of Plunket, Grattan, Saurin, later, O'Connell, and others less well known, are found in many of these letters, and there are valentines from " Jemmy Saurin," apostrophising " the

blue eyes of Kitty " (one of the Chief's daughters, and grandmother of " Martin Ross ") ; genuine, perhaps, but more probably faked by the young lady's heartless relatives ; anagrams upon the name of Charles Kendal Bushe, and an epigram, written by C. K. B. himself, which has a very charming deftness, and shall be transcribed here.

To Chloe

(To accompany the gift of a watch)

Among our fashionable Bands,
No wonder Time should love to linger,
Allowed to place his two rude hands
Where others dare not lay a finger.

The more I investigate the contents of the old letter box the more fascinating they prove themselves to be.

I must, at all events, endeavour to refrain from irrelevant quotation—(even regretfully omitting " The cure for Ellen P.'s spots. Kate writes me word her face is now as clear as chrystal ")—and will try to deal only with such of the contents of the box as come legitimately within my scope.

The Chief's letters cover a wide period, from about 1795 (a couple of years after his marriage) to 1837. One does not, perhaps, find in them the brilliance that is associated with his name in public life and in general society. Those from which I have made extracts were written to his wife. Deeply woven in them is the devotion to her that was the mainspring of his life, and in works of devotion one need not expect to find epigram.[1]

In one of them, written in 1807, he writes from Dublin, to her, in the country, telling her of " an unfortunate business " in which he, " without any personal ill-will to anyone," " found it his duty to

[1] In these, and all the following letters, I have left the spelling, punctuation, etc., unchanged.

take a part." He deplores that "among the Members of the Bar coldness and jealousy prevail, where there had been the utmost harmony and unanimity." "It is not in my nature to like such a state of things," he says, and, I believe, says truly, "and when I am alone my spirits are affected by it in a way that I wou'd not for the World confess to anyone but you. I am told that I am libell'd in the newspapers, which I dont know for I have not read them, and which I wou'd not care about, from the same motives that have so often, to your knowledge, made me indifferent about being prais'd in them. . . . You remember on a former trying occasion how I acted and I can never forget the heroism with which you supported me and encourag'd me in a conduct which was apparently ruinous in its consequences to yourself and our darling Babies. Ever since you left this, my mind has been agitated in the way I have described to you. I am seven years older and my nerves twenty years older than at the period of the Union. Judge, then, the delight I feel at the prospect of seeing again so soon, the bosom friend dearer than all, the only person upon whose heart I can repose my own when weary—I judge of it by the pleasure I feel in thus unburthening myself to you, and in the consciousness that the very writing of this letter has given me the only warm, comfortable and confidential glow of heart which I have felt since you left me. Adieu beloved Nan—Pray *burn* this *immediately*" (twice underlined) "and let no human being learn anything of those thoughts which to you alone I wou'd communicate. Ever yours C. K. B."

It is a hundred and more years since this injunction was written. The paper is stained and brittle, and I think that perhaps a tear, perhaps also a kiss or two, have contributed a little to the staining. But though

she disobeyed him I believe he has forgiven her. I hope he will also forgive a great-granddaughter who has chanced upon this record of a disobedience that few could blame and that any lover would extol.

Long afterwards the same thought came in nearly the same words to another Irishman, the poet, George Darley, and he wrote those lines that have in them the same note of whispered tenderness that still breathes from the discoloured page of the letter that should have been burned a hundred years ago.

"One in whose gentle bosom I
Can pour my inmost heart of woes,
Like the care-burthened honey-fly
That hides his murmurs in the rose."

* * * * *

I have said that it was an interesting time to be alive in, this junction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That the Chief's sympathies were, as I have already mentioned, with the men on the losing side is very well known. In one of the early letters to his wife, he speaks of having had "a very prosperous circuit," and says his business was "pretty general, not confin'd to friends or United Irishmen, tho these latter have been no bad friends to me either." He did not defend their methods, but he stood by his friends, and to the end of his life he stood by his opinions.

In a letter written by Mrs. Bushe to their son Charles, at Castlehaven, after the death of the Chief (that is to say, forty-three years, at least, after the Act of Union), she speaks of the chaotic state of the country, and the ruin caused by the arbitrary and ill-considered enforcement of the recent Poor Law legislation. "Useless however to complain. England has the *might* which supersedes the right, and we are punished now for our own folly in consenting to the *Union!*

Just what your Father predicted—'when Ireland gives up the *rights* that she has, what right has she then to complain?'—How true this little squib of the poor dear C——" (Chief). "Happy for him he did not live to see the ruin he predicted!"

The following account of a visit to Edgeworthstown forms part of a letter, written at Omagh and dated Monday, August 16th, 1810. It is from Chief Justice Bushe to his wife; the beginning portion of the letter is printed in the Appendix I. (page 332).

"I am not surpriz'd that you ask about Edgeworthstown, and I can only tell you that every thing which Smyly has often said to us in praise of it is true and unexaggerated. Society in that house is certainly on the best plan I have ever met with. Edgeworth is a very clever fellow of much talent, and tho not deeply inform'd on any subject, is highly (which is consistent with being superficially) so in all. He talks a great deal and very pleasantly and loves to exhibit and perhaps obtrude what he wou'd be so justifiably vain of (his daughter and her works) if you did not trace that pride to his predominant Egotism, and see that he admires her because she is *his* child, and her works because they are *his* Grand Children. Mrs. Edgeworth is uncommonly agreeable and has been and not long ago very pretty. She is a perfect Scholar, and at the same time a good Mother and housewife. She is an excellent painter, like yourself, and like you has been oblig'd by producing Originals to give up Copying: She is you know a 5th or 6th Wife and her last child was his 22d. Two Miss Sneyds, amiable old maids, live with him. They are sisters of one of his wives, a beautiful and celebrated Honoria Sneyd, mention'd in Miss Seward's Monody on Major André and known by her misfortune in having been betroth'd to that poor fellow. They are Litchfield people of

the old literary set of the Garricks Dr. Johnson Miss Seward &c &c. There are many young Edgeworths male and female all of promise and talent and all living round the same table with this set among whom I have not yet mention'd Miss Edgeworth, because I consider you as already knowing her from her works. In such a Society you may suppose Conversation must be good, but I was not prepared to find it so easy. It is the only set of the kind I ever met with in which you are neither led nor driven, but actually fall, and that imperceptibly, into literary topics, and I attribute it to this that in that house literature is not a treat for Company upon Invitation days, but is actually the daily bread of the family. Miss Edgeworth is for nothing more remarkable than for the total absence of vanity. She seems to have studied her father's foibles for two purposes, to avoid them and never to appear to see them, and what does not always happen, her want of affectation is unaffected. She is as well bred and as well dress'd and as easy and as much like other people as if she was not a celebrated author. No pretensions, not a bit of blue stocking is to be discover'd. In the Conversation she neither advances or keeps back, but mixes naturally and cheerfully in it, and tho in the number of words she says less than anyone yet the excellence of her remarks and the unpremeditated point which she gives them makes you recollect her to have talk'd more than others. I was struck by a little felicity of hers the night I was there. Shakespear was talk'd of as he always is, and I mentioned what you have lately heard me speak of as a literary discovery and curiosity, that he has borrow'd the Character of Cardinal Wolsey from Campion, the old Chronicler of Ireland. This was new to them and Edgeworth began one of his rattles—

" ' Well Sir, and has the minute, and the laborious, and the indefatigable, and the prying, and the investigating Malone found this out ? '

" Miss Edgeworth said, almost under her breath,

" ' It was too large for him to see ! '

" Is not that good Epigram ? I think it is. Edgeworth gave her the advantage of taking her into France with his Wife and others of his family during the short peace, and they were persons to improve such an opportunity. Miss Edgeworth's Madame Fleury, in the Fashionable Tales is form'd on a true story which she learn'd there. You will think this no description unless you know what her figure is, and face &c. &c. I think her very good looking and can suppose that she *was* once pretty. Imagine Miss Wilmot at about 43 years old for such I suppose Miss E. to be, with all the Intelligence of her Countenance perhaps encreas'd and the Sensibility preserv'd but somewhat reduc'd, the figure very smart and neat as it must be if like Miss W's but some of its beautiful redundancies retir'd upon a peace Establishment.

" Such is Miss Edgeworth but take her for all in all, there is nothing like her to be seen, or rather to be known, for it is impossible to be an hour in her Company without recognizing her Talent, benevolence and worth.

" An interesting anecdote occurs to me that Edgeworth told us and forc'd her to produce the proof of.

" Old Johnson of St. Paul's Churchyard London has always been her bookseller and purchas'd her Works at first experimentally and latterly liberally. He died a few months ago and rather suddenly and a few hours before his death he sent for his nephew to whom he bequeath'd his property and who succeeded him in his business and told him that he felt he had done Miss E. injustice in only giving her £450 for Fashionable

Tales and desir'd him to give her £450 more. He died that day and the next the Nephew sent her an account of the Transaction and the £450. This story only requires to be told by Miss E. I read the original letter.

" Adieu beloved Nan. I have scribbled very much but since I left town I have no other opportunity of chatting to you.

" Ever your
C. K. B."

CHAPTER III

MAINLY MARIA EDGEWORTH

THERE is a portrait of Mrs. Bushe that is now in the possession of one of her many great-grandchildren, Sir Egerton Coghill. It is a small picture, in pastel, very delightful in technique, and the subject is worthy of the technique. Nancy Crampton was her name, and the picture was probably done at the time of her marriage, in 1793, and is a record of the excellent judgment of the future Lord Chief Justice of Ireland.

It would be hard to find a more charming face. From below a cloud of brown curls, deep and steady blue eyes look straight into yours from under level brows. The extreme intellectuality of the expression does not master its sweetness. In looking at the picture the lines come back—

> " One in whose gentle bosom I
> Can pour my inmost heart of woes."

No wonder that in the troublous days of the Union, when bribes and threats assailed the young barrister who was already a power in the land, no wonder indeed that he often, as he says in one of his letters, " heav'd a sigh, and thought of Nancy," and knew " with delight " that on her heart he could repose his own when weary.

Here, I think, may fitly be given some lines that

the Chief wrote, when he was an old man, to accompany the gift to his wife of a white fur tippet.

TO A TIPPET.

Soon as thy milk-white folds are prest
Like Wreaths of Snow about her breast,
Oh guard that precious heart from harm
Like thee 't is pure, like thee 't is warm.

Love and wit are immortal, we know, but the spirit is rare that can inspire them after nearly fifty years of married life; yet rarer, perhaps, the young heart that can persuade them still to dwell with it and to overlook the silver head.

I grieve that I have been unable to find any of Mrs. Bushe's earlier letters. She was a brilliant creature in all ways, and had a rare and enchanting gift as an artist, which, even in those days, when young ladies of quality were immured inexorably within the padded cell of the amateur, could scarce have failed to make its mark, had she not, as the Chief, with marital complacency, observed, devoted herself to "making originals instead of copies."

In her time there were few women who gave even a moment's thought to the possibilities of individual life as an artist, however aware they might be—must have been—of the gifts they possessed. I daresay that my great-grandmother was well satisfied enough with what life had brought her—"honour, love, obedience, troops of friends." In one of her letters, written when she was a very old woman, she writes gaily of the hateful limitations of old age, and says:

"When people *will* live beyond their time such things must be, and I have a right to be thankful that old Time has put on his Slippers, and does not ride roughshod over me."

(Which shows, I think, that marriage had subdued

the artist in her, and had, in compensation, evoked the philosopher.)

It is clear, from the last letter in the preceding chapter, that Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. Bushe had not met before 1810. How soon afterwards they met, and the friendship, that lasted for the rest of their lives, began, I cannot ascertain. In one of Miss Edgeworth's letters (quoted in one of the many volumes that have been written about her) she says :

" Having named Mrs. Bushe, I must mention that whenever I meet her she is my delight and admiration, from her wit, humour, and variety of conversation."

Among the contents of the letter-box that Martin gave me are several letters from Miss Edgeworth, and they testify to the fact that she lost no time in falling in love with her " very dear Mrs. Bushe."

I recognise, gratefully, how highly I am privileged in being permitted to include in my book these letters from the brilliant pioneer of Irish novelists. To the readers and lovers of, for example, " Castle Rackrent," they may seem a trifle disappointing in their submission to the conventions of their period, a period that decreed a mincing and fettered mode for its lady letter-writers, and rigorously exacted from its females the suitable simper.

The writing is pale, prim, and pointed, undeniably suggestive of prunes, and prisms, and papa (that inveterate papa of Maria's) ; yet, in spite of the fetters of convention, the light step is felt, and although the manner may mince, it cannot conceal the humour, the spirit, and the charm of disposition.

Miss Edgeworth was born in the same year as Chief Justice Bushe, and died six years later than he, in 1849. Her friendship with Mrs. Bushe remained unbroken to the last, and their mutual admiration continued unshaken. In such of Miss Edgeworth's

letters to my great-grandmother as I have seen, she speaks but little of literary work. One of the later letters, however (dated 1827), accompanied a present of one of her books; the date would make it appear that this was one of the sequels to "Early Lessons"—(in which the unfortunate Rosamond is victimised by the dastardly fraud of the Purple Jar, and Harry gets no breakfast until he has made his bed, although the fact that his sole ablutions consist in washing his hands is in no way imputed to him as sin. But this, also, is of the period).

MISS MARIA EDGEWORTH TO MRS. BUSHE.

"EDGEWORTH'S TOWN

"*July* 12. 1827.

"How can I venture to send such an insignificant little child's book to Mrs. Bushe?—Because I know she loves me and will think the smallest offering from me a mark of kindness—of confidence in her indulgence and partiality.

"My sister Harriet has given me great pleasure by writing me word how kindly you *speak* of me, dear Mrs. Bushe, and as I know your sincerity, to speak and to think kindly with you are one and the same. Believe me I have the honour to be like you in this. In every thing that has affected you since we parted (that has come to my knowledge) I have keenly sympathised—Oh that we could meet again. I am sure our minds would open and join immediately. After all there is no greater mistake in life than counting happiness by pounds shillings and pence— You and I have never done this I believe— We ought to meet again. Cannot you contrive it?

"I am glad at least that my sister Harriet has the pleasure which I have not. Your penetration will soon discover all my father's heart and all his talents

in her. Remember me most respectfully and most affectionately to the Chief Justice and believe me

" Most truly your
" Affectionate friend
" Maria Edgeworth.

" Harriet did not know this little vol was published or that I intended publishing it when you spoke to her.

" I had amused myself with the assistance of a confederate sister at home in getting them printed without her knowing it for the Wise pleasure of surprising her as she had always said I could not print anything without her knowledge— These little wee wee plays were written ages ago in my age of happiness for birthday diversions and Harriet added the cross Prissy 16 years ago ! "

Miss Maria Edgeworth to Mrs. Bushe
Kilmurrey, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny.
" Edgeworth's Town
" *June* 18th 1815.

" My very dear Mrs. Bushe,

" This letter is dictated by my father as you might guess by the bold appellation with which I have begun. He projects a migration southward this ensuing month —towards Cork where Mrs. Edgeworth's brother is fatly and fitly provided for in the Church. In his route my father glances sideways to the real pleasure of having an opportunity of seeing you free from all the shackles of high station and high fashion, in the retirement which your wise husband prefers to both. Tell us when he will be at home and when at home whether it will be *convenient* (we are vain to think it would be *agreeable* you perceive) to receive us for a day and a night. There will be three of us, papa,

mama and self. Though we were *Foxites* we cannot sleep '*three in a bed.*' As the circuit will probably engage the Sol. gen [1] for some time to come our prospect looks to the period when he may return.

"So far *from* my father—now *of* him. This day he is much better and we are all in high spirits. And he will not let me add one word more.

"Dear Mrs. Bushe,

"Affectionately yours

"MARIA EDGEWORTH."

"FROM MISS MARIA EDGEWORTH
TO MRS. BUSHE, Kilmurrey, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny

"EDGEWORTH'S TOWN
Augt. 26*th* 1832.

MY DEAR MRS. BUSHE

"Did you ever form any idea of the extent of my assurance—

"If you did I have a notion I shall now exceed whatever might have been your estimate.

"I am about to ask you—to ask you plunging—without preface or apology to go to work for me—and to give *me* only because I have the assurance to ask for it what every body would wish to have from you and nobody who had any pretence to modesty (out of your own family and privileged circle of dears) would venture to think of asking for.

"A bag if you please of your own braidwork my dear Mrs. Bushe—Louisa Beaufort who has just come to visit us tells me that your braid work is so beautiful that I do covet this souvenir from you. The least *Forget me not*—or *Heartsease* will fulfil all my wishes—if indeed you are so very kind as to listen to me. I

[1] Solicitor-General.

have your Madonna over the chimney piece in our library and often do I look at her with affection and gratitude. I wish dear Mrs. Bushe we could ever meet again, but this world goes so badly that I fear our throats will be cut by order of O'Connell & Co very soon, or we shall be beggars walking the world, and walking the world *different* ways. It is good to laugh as long as we can, however and whenever we can—between crying times—of which there are so many too many now a days.

" I hear sad tidings of my much loved, more loved even than admired, friend Sir Walter Scott. His body lives and is likely to live some time—his mind oh such a mind! is gone forever. His temper too which was most charming and most amiable is changed by disease. Mrs. Lockhart that daughter who so admires him is more to be pitied than words can express. His mind was a little revived by the first return to Abbotsford—but sunk again— Of all afflictions surely this is the worst that friends can have to endure—death a comparative blessing.

" I find the love of garden grow upon me as I grow older more and more. Shrubs and flowers and such small gay things, that bloom and please and fade and wither and are gone and we care not for them, are refreshing interests, in life, and if we cannot say never fading pleasures, we may say unreproved pleasures and never grieving losses.

" I remember your history of the bed of tulips or anemones which the Chief Justice fancied he should fancy and which you reared for him and he walked over without knowing.

" Does your taste for flowers continue. We have some fine carnations—if you could fancy them. Some way or other they should get to you. If not by a flying carpet by as good a mode of conveyance or

better—the frank of Sir W. Gapes or Right Hon. C. G. S. Stanley.

"To either of which direct for me anything of whatever size or weight (barring the size of the house or so) and it will be conveyed to me swift and sure as if the African Magician himself carried the same.

"I more much more wish to hear from you my dear Mrs. Bushe, and to know from your own self how you are going on than to have all the braided bags however pretty that could be given to me. That is the truth of the matter. So pray write to me and tell me all that concerns you—for

"I am very sincerely and affectionately
"Your little old friend
"MARIA EDGEWORTH.

"Will you present my affectionate respects to the Chief Justice. I wish his country were more worthy of him—or rather I wish his country were allowed to be and to show itself more worthy of such a Chief Justice and such a private character as his.

"I am convinced that if the Scotch maxim of Let well alone were pursued in Ireland we should do well enough. But to the rage of obtaining popularity in a single individual must the peace of a country be sacrificed.[1]

"What can the heart of such a man be made of? And however great his talents how infinitely little and nauseously mean must his Mind be!

"He is too clever and clear sighted not to know too well what he is about and what his own motions are. It is my belief however that he could not now be quiet if he would he has such a Mob-omania upon him.

"We are quiet enough here—as yet."

[1] Daniel O'Connell.

" The Lord Chief Justice of Ireland
" 17 Upper Mount Street, Dublin.
From Miss Maria Edgeworth.

A proverb goes—(I love it well)
Of " Give an inch and take an ell "
'Tis lady's law—and, to be brief
Now must be mine, my dear Lord Chief

" The case is this—

" May I beg your Lordship not to shake your head irrevocably before you have heard me out—

" Suppose . . . . . I only modestly say *suppose* . . . which leaves the matter just as it was, in case your Lordship is determined to *oppose* —suppose now, in short, you could contrive to come down to us a day —a day or two—(pray dont start off !) or if you *could* possibly bear *3*—days before the assizes ? You could get—say here—without hurry to dinner at 7—or—name your hour—and you should have coffee comfortably without being obliged to enter an appearance in the drawing room, and should retire to rest at whatever hour you like—and I do humbly concieve that your bed and all concerns, might be as comfortably arranged here as at Mullingar Hotel—(though I wd not disparage sd Hotel)— But double bedded or single room and room for friend and servant adjoining—and a whole apartment with backstairs of its own shut out from the rest of the house is at your Lordship's disposal— And as to invalid habits unless you have the habit of walking in your sleep all over the house I don't see how they could incommode or be incommoded.

" If you mean that you like to lie in bed in the morning late— Lie as late as ever you please.

" No questions asked. No breakfast waiting for you below, or thought of your appearance till you please to shine upon us. Breakfast waiting your

bell's touch, in your bed, or out of it at any hour you please— And no worry of Company at dinner (unless you bespeak the world and his wife— But if you did we should not know where to find them for you).

" We have only our own every-day family party and should only wish and hope to add to it, to meet you, a sister, who in happy days knew and admired you, even from her childhood (Mrs. Butler née Harriet Edgeworth) and her husband, whom you knew in happy days too, at the late Bishop of Meath's. Thank you my dear Lord for promising to look for the Bishop's verses

" Now pray let me thank you in my heart for your answer to this letter.

" Mrs Bushe if she likes me as well as I most humbly believe she does, will put in a good word for us—and her good words can never be said in vain—and must be followed by good deeds.

" I am my dear Lord
with more respect than appears here
And all the sincerely affectionate
regard that has been felt for you (we need not say how many years)—

" Your—to be obliged—humble servant
" Maria Edgeworth

" Edgeworth Town
" *Feb.* 1*st* 1837 "

CHAPTER IV

OLD FORGOTTEN THINGS

Chief Justice Bushe died in 1843, and Maria Edgeworth in 1849, but Mrs. Bushe lived on till 1857, a delight and an inspiration to her children and grandchildren. To her, even more than to the Chief, may be ascribed the inevitable, almost invariable turn for the Arts, in some form, frequently in all forms, that distinguishes their descendants, and to her also is attributed a quality in story-telling known as " Crampton dash," which may be explained as an intensifying process, analogous to the swell in an organ.

But few of their grandchildren, that potent and far-reaching first cousinhood of seventy, now remain. Bushes, Plunkets, Coghills, Foxes, Franks, Harrises, they were a notable company, and I imagine that in the middle and later years of the last century they made a clan of no small power and influence. " Dublin is my washpot, over Merrion Square will I cast out my shoe," they might have said, possibly did say, in their arrogant youth, when " The Family," good-looking, amusing, and strenuous, " took the flure " in the Dublin society of the 'fifties. From among them came no luminary in Art, specially outstanding, yet there was scarcely one of them without some touch of that spark which is lit by a coal taken from the altar, and is, for want of a better term,

called originality; and although the reputations of neither Shakespeare nor Michael Angelo were threatened, they could have provided a club dedicated to "Les Quatz' Arts" with a very useful selection of members.

(Yet the mention of Shakespeare, and the wish to be sincere, force me to recall a tale of two of these first cousins of Martin's mother and mine, the one an artist of delightful achievement, the other, amongst her many gifts, an astronomer and writer. The latter reproached the former for her neglect of Shakespeare, and announced her intention of reading aloud to her one of his plays. The artist replied with a high and characteristic tranquillity, "Shakespeare was a coarse man, my dear, but you may read him to me if you like. I can go into a reverie.")

It is not out of place to mention here that the first writing in which Martin and I collaborated was a solemnly preposterous work, a dictionary of the words and phrases peculiar to our family, past and present, with derivations and definitions—the definitions being our opportunity. It might possibly—in fact I think some selections would—entertain the public, but I can confidently say it will never be offered to it; Bowdler himself would quail at the difficulties it would present.

* * * * *

Martin has, in her memoir of her brother Robert, given a sketch of life at Ross as it was in the old days, in its patriarchal simplicity, its pastoral abundance, its limitless hospitality, its feudal relations with the peasants. Its simplicity was, I imagine, of a more primitive type than can be claimed for any conditions that I can personally remember in my own country. The time of which she has written was already passing when she arrived on the scene, and she had to rely

mainly on the records of her elders. The general atmosphere there and in my country was much the same, but a certain degree of sophistication may have set in a little earlier here, and when I say "here," I speak of that fair and far-away district, the Barony of West Carbery, County Cork, the ultimate corner of the ultimate speck of Europe—Ireland. You will not find West Carbery's name in the atlas, but Cape Clear will not be denied, and there is nothing of West Carbery west of Cape Clear, unless one counts its many sons and daughters who have gone even farther west, to the Land of the Setting Sun.

The Ireland that Martin and I knew when we were children is fast leaving us; every day some landmark is wiped out; I will try, as she has done, to recapture some of the flying memories.

To begin with

Castle Townshend.

Castle Townshend is a small village in the south-west of the County of Cork, unique in many ways among Irish villages, incomparable in the beauty of its surroundings, remarkable in its high level of civilisation, and in the number of its "quality houses." "High ginthry does be jumpin' mad for rooms in this village," was how the matter was defined by a skilled authority, while another, equally versed in social matters, listened coldly to commendation of a rival village, and remarked, "It's a nice place enough, but the ginthry is very light in it. It's very light with them there entirely."

I hasten to add that this criticism did not refer to the morals of the gentry, merely to their scarcity—as one says "a light crop."

Castlehaven Harbour, to whose steep shores it adheres, defiant of the law of gravity, by whose rules

it should long since have slipped into the sea, has its place in history. The Spanish Armada touched *en passant* (touched rather hard in some places), one of Queen Elizabeth's admirals, Admiral Leveson, touched too, fairly hard, and left cannon-ball bruises on the walls of Castlehaven Castle. The next distinguished visitors were a force of Cromwell's troopers. Brian's Fort, built by Brian Townshend, the son of one of Cromwell's officers, still stands firm, and Swift's tower, near it, is distinguished as the place where "the gloomy Dean" (of *autre fois*) wrote a Latin poem, called "Carberiae Rupes." A translation of this compliment to the Rocks of Carbery was printed one hundred and seventy years ago in Smith's "History of the Co. Cork." It was much admired by the historian. A quotation from it may be found in "A Record of Holiday," in one of our books, "Some Irish Yesterdays," but candour compels me to admit that four of its lines, descriptive of the coast of Carbery—

> "Oft too, with hideous yawn, the cavern wide
> Presents an orifice on either side;
> A dismal orifice, from sea to sea
> Extended, pervious to the god of day."

—might be taken as equally descriptive of its readers.

The *Titanic* passed within a few miles of Castlehaven on her first and last voyage; I saw her racing to the West, into the glow of a fierce winter sunset. It was from Castle Townshend that the first warnings of the sharks that were waiting for the *Lusitania* were sent; and into Castlehaven Harbour came, by many succeeding tides, victims of that tragedy. Let it be remembered to the honour of the fishermen who harvested those sheaves of German reaping, that the money and the jewels, which most of the drowned

CASTLEHAVEN HARBOUR. V. F. M.

CARBERIAE RUPES. E. B. C.

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people had brought with them, were left with them, untouched.

It must have been eighty or ninety years ago that the first member of "The Chief's" family reached Castlehaven. This was his second son, the Rev. Charles Bushe, who was, as Miss Edgeworth says of her stepmamma's brother, "fatly and fitly provided for" with the living of Castlehaven. Somervilles and Townshends had been living and intermarrying in Castlehaven Parish, with none to molest their ancient solitary reign, since Brian Townshend built himself the fort from which he could look forth upon one of the loveliest harbours in Ireland, and the Reverend Thomas Somerville, the first of his family to settle in Munster, took to himself (by purchase from the representatives of the Earl of Castlehaven) the old O'Driscoll Castle, and lies buried beside it, in St. Barrahane's churchyard, under a slab that proclaims him to have been "A Worthy Magistrate, and a Safe and Affable Companion." The two clans enjoyed in those days, I imagine, a splendid isolation, akin to that of the Samurai in Old Japan, and the Rev. Charles Bushe, an apostle of an alien cultivation, probably realised the feelings of Will Adams when he was cast ashore at Osaka, may, indeed, have felt his position to be as precarious as that of the first missionary at the Court of the King of the Cannibal Islands.

My great-uncle Charles was for forty years the Rector of Castlehaven Parish, and the result of his ministry that most directly affects me was the marriage of my father, Colonel Thomas Henry Somerville, of Drishane, to the Rev. Charles's niece, Adelaide Coghill. (That she was also his step-sister-in-law is a fact too bewildering to anyone save a professional genealogist for me to dwell on it here. I will merely say that my mother's father was Admiral Sir Josiah

Coghill, and her mother was Anna Maria Bushe, daughter of the Chief Justice.) [1]

There is a picture extant, the work of that artist to whom I have already referred, in which is depicted the supposed indignation of the Aboriginal Red men, *i.e.*, my grandfather Somerville and his household, at the apostasy of my father, a Prince of the (Red) Blood Royal, in departing from the family habit of marrying a Townshend, and in allying himself with a Paleface. In that picture the Red men and women are armed with clubs, the Palefaces with croquet mallets. It was with these that they entered in and possessed the land. My grandmother (*née* Townshend, of Castle Townshend), a small and eminently dignified lady, one of my great-aunts, and other female relatives, are profanely represented, capering with fury, clad in brief garments of rabbit skin. The Paleface females surge in vast crinolines; the young Red man is encircled by them, as was the swineherd in Andersen's fairy tale, by the Court ladies. My grandfather swings a tomahawk, and is faced by my uncle, Sir Joscelyn Coghill, leader of the second wave of invasion, with a photographic camera (the first ever seen in West Carbery) and a tripod.

* * * * *

I think I must diverge somewhat farther from my

[1] Among the letters in the old letter-box of which I have spoken was a paper, the contents of which may be offered to the professional genealogist. They are as follows:

"By the marriage of Charles Bushe to Emmeline Coghill, (daughter of Sir J. Coghill Bt. by his first wife,) the lady becomes neice (*sic*) to her husband, sister to her mother, and daughter to her grandmother, aunt to her sisters and cousins, and grandaunt to her own children, stepmother to her cousins, and sister-in-law to her father, while her mother will be at the same time aunt and grandmother to her nephews and neices." I recommend no one to try to understand these statements.—E. Œ. S.

main thesis in order to talk a little about the Ancient Order of Hibernians (if I may borrow the appellation) who were thus dispossessed. For, as is the way all the world over, the missionaries ate up the cannibals, and the Red men have left only their names and an unworthy granddaughter to commemorate their customs.

Few South Pacific Islands are now as isolated as was, in those days,—I speak of ninety or one hundred years ago—Castle Townshend. The roads were little better than bridle-paths; they straggled and struggled, as far as was possible, along the crests of the hills, and this was as a protection to the traveller, who could less easily be ambushed and waylaid by members of the large assortment of secret societies, Whiteboys, Ribbonmen, Molly Maguires, Outlaws in variety, whose spare moments between rebellions were lightened by highway robbery. I have heard that my great-grandmother's "coach" was the only wheeled vehicle that came into Castle Townshend. My great-grandfather used to ride to Cork, fifty-two miles, and the tradition is that he had a fabulous black mare, named Bess, who trotted the journey in three hours (which I take leave to doubt). All the heavy traffic came and went by sea. The pews of the church came from Cork by ship. They have passed now, but I can remember them, and I should have thought that their large simplicity would not have been beyond the scope of the local carpenter. There was a triple erection for the pulpit; the clerk sat in the basement, the service was read *au premier*, and to the top story my great-uncle Charles was wont to mount, in a black gown and "bands," and thence deliver classic discourses, worthy, as I have heard, of the son of "silver-tongued Bushe," but memorable to me (at the age of, say, six) for the conviction,

imparted by them anew each Sunday, that they were samples of eternity, and would never end. My eldest brother, who shared the large square pew with our grandfather and me, was much sustained by a feud with a coastguard child, with whom he competed in the emulous construction of grimaces, mainly based, like the sermons, on an excessive length of tongue, but I had no such solace. Feuds are, undoubtedly, a great solace to *ennui*, and in the elder times of a hundred years or so ago they seem to have been the mainstay of society in West Cork. Splendid feuds, thoroughly made, solid, and without a crack into which any importunate dove could insert so much as an olive-leaf.

Ireland was, in those days, a forcing bed for individuality. Men and women, of the upper classes, were what is usually described as "a law unto themselves," which is another way of saying that they broke those of all other authorities. That the larger landowners were, as a class, honourable, reasonably fair-minded, and generous, as is not, on the whole, disputed, is a credit to their native kindliness and good breeding. They had neither public opinion nor legal restraint to interfere with them. Each estate was a kingdom, and, in the impossibility of locomotion, each neighbouring potentate acquired a relative importance quite out of proportion to his merits, for to love your neighbour—or, at all events, to marry her—was almost inevitable when matches were a matter of mileage, and marriages might be said to have been made by the map. Enormous families were the rule in all classes, such being reputed to be the will of God, and the olive branches about the paternal table often became of so dense a growth as to exclude from it all other fruits of the earth, save, possibly, the potato.

Equally vigorous, as I have said, was the growth of character. There was room in those spacious days for expansion, and the advantage was not wasted. There was an old lady who lived in West Carbery, and died some fifty years ago, about whom legend has accumulated. She lived in a gaunt grey house, that still exists, and is as suggestive of a cave as anything as high and narrow, and implacably symmetrical, can be. Tall elms enshroud it, and rooks at evening make a black cloud about it. It has now been civilised, but I can remember the awe it inspired in me as a child. She was of distinguished and ancient family (though she was born in such remote ages that one would say there could have been scarcely more than two generations between her and Adam and Eve). She was very rich, and she was a miser of the school of comic opera, showy and dramatic. Her only son, known, not without reason, as "Johnny Wild," is said, after many failures, to have finally extracted money from her by the ingenious expedient of inveigling her into a shed in which was a wicked bull, and basing a claim for an advance on the probability that the bull would do the same. She lost ten shillings on a rent day, and raised it among her tenants by means of a round-robin. Her costume was that of a scarecrow that has lost all self-respect, yet—a solitary extravagance—when she went in a train she travelled first-class. It is said that on a journey to Dublin she was denounced to the guard as a beggar-woman who had mistaken the carriage. It happened that the denouncer was a lady with a courtesy-title derived from a peerage of recent and dubious origin. The beggar-woman threatened to recite their respective pedigrees on the platform, and the protest was withdrawn. Naturally she fought with most of her neighbours, specially her kinsfolk, and, as a result of a

specially sanguinary engagement, announced that she would never again "set foot" in the village sacred to her clan (and it may be noted that the term "to set foot" invariably implies something sacrificial, a rite, but one always more honoured in the breach than in the observance) "until the day when she went into it with four horses and her two feet foremost," which referred to her final transit to the family burying-ground. On her death-bed, a cousin, not unnaturally anxious as to her future welfare, offered to read to her suitable portions of the Bible, but the offer was declined.

"Faith, my dear, I'll not trouble ye. I know it all by heart; but I'm obliged to ye, and I wish I had a pound that I might give it ye, but I haven't so much as a ha'penny."

She shortly afterwards died, and there was found in her bedroom, in a desk, £500, and a further £20 was discovered rolled up in an old bonnet, a black straw bonnet with bright green ribbons.

CHAPTER V

EARLY WEST CARBERY

I HAVE already commented on the social importance, and value, of the feuds of a century ago. Fights were made, like the wall-papers, the carpets, the furniture, to last. Friendships too, I daresay, but though it was possible to dissolve a friendship, the full-fledged fight, beaked and clawed, was incapable as an eagle of laying down its weapons.

Such a fight there was between two sisters, both long since dead. They were said to have been among " The Beauties of the Court of the Regent "—delightful phrase, bringing visions of ringlets and rouge, and low necks and high play—and both were famed for their wit, their charm, and their affection for each other. Still unmarried, their mother brought them home to Castle Townshend (for reasons not unconnected with the run of the cards), not quite so young as they had been—in those days a young lady's first youth seems to have been irrevocably lost at about three and twenty—yet none the less dangerous on that account. Most feuds originate in a difference of opinion, but this one, or so it has always been said, was due to a disastrous similarity in taste. Legends hint that a young cousin, my grandfather, then a personable youth fresh from Oxford, was the difficulty. But whatever the cause (and he married the elder sister) peace was

not found in sixty years; the combatants died, and the fight outlived the fighters.

In these feebler days the mental attitude of that time is hard to realise. The stories that have come down to us only complicate the effort to reconstitute the people and the period, but they may help—some of them—to explain the French Revolution. A tale is told of one of these ex-beauties, noted, be it remembered, for her charm of manner, her culture, her sense of humour. Near the end of her long life she went to the funeral of a relative, leaning decorously upon the arm of a kinsman. At the churchyard a countryman pushed forward between her and the coffin. She thereupon disengaged her arm from that of her squire, and struck the countryman in the face. It is no less characteristic of the time that the countryman's attitude does not come into the story, but it seems to me probable that he went home and boasted then, and for the rest of his life, that old Madam —— had "bet him a blow in the face."

There is yet another story, written in a letter to a young cousin, by my father's cousin, the late Mrs. Pierrepont Mundy, a very delightful letter-writer and story-teller, who has taken with her to the next world a collection of anecdotes that may possibly cause her relatives there to share the regret of her friends here that she did not leave them behind her.

"One more link in the chain of events," she writes,

"Grandma's sister-in-law married her brother, 'Devil Dick,' who was violent to madness. His mother alone was not afraid of him. She had a spirit of her own. On one occasion she went over a ship at Cork, intending to make purchases from contraband goods. She set aside chosen ones, but was stopped by the *Excisemen*. She looked at the basket full,

raised her tiny foot (which you and I, dearest A., inherit) and kicked the whole collection overboard into the Sea!

"That same foot she released from her high-heeled shoe on arriving, driven from Cork in a 'Jarvey,' and, when the *Cocher* said 'Stop Madam, you haven't paid!' she threw the money on the ground, and with her shoe she dealt him a smart box on the ear and said,

"'Take *that* before the Grand Jury!'

(meaning *she* could do anything and would not get fined.)

"*Une maïtresse femme!*"

Thus my cousin concludes her story, not without a certain approbation of our ancestress.

Indisputably the coming of the Palefaces slackened the moral fibre of Castle Townshend; the fire has gone out of the fights and the heat out of the hatreds. I do not claim for the later generations a higher standard; peace is mainly ensued by lack of concentration; it is not so much that we forgive, as that we forget. I regret that these early histories do not present my departed relatives in a more attractive light, but personal experience has taught me how infinitely boring can be the virtues of other people's families.

A strange product of these high explosives was my father, who, as was said of another like unto him, was "The gentlest crayture ever came into a house." He had no brothers and but one sister, a fact that did not, I think, distress my grandparents, who were in advance of their period in considering the prevalent immense families ill-bred; and even had the matter been for them a subject of regret, they had at least one consolation—a consolation offered in a similar case to a cousin of Martin's—"Afther all," it was

said, " if ye had a hundhred of them ye couldn't have a greater variety."

An only son, with a solitary sister, brought up in the days when the difference between the sexes was clearly defined by the position of the definite article, " an only son " being by no means in the same case, grammatical or otherwise, with " only a daughter," it would not have been surprising had he developed into such a flower of culture as had blossomed in " Johnny Wild." I expect that the rare and passionate devotion of his father to his mother taught him a lesson not generally inculcated in his time. In truth, his love and consideration for his mother and sister amounted to anachronism in those days, when chivalry was mostly relegated to the Eglinton Tournament, and unselfishness was bracketed with needlework as a graceful and exclusive attribute of the Ministering Angel.

Mrs. Pierrepont Mundy, once defined the two men of her acquaintance whom most she delighted to honour as

" *Preux Chevaliers !* Christian gentlemen, who feed their dogs from the dinner-table ! "

I find it impossible to better this as a description of my father. I recognise the profound conventionality of saying that dogs and children adored him, yet, conventional though the statement may be, it is inflicted upon me by the facts of the case. In him children knew, intuitively, the kindred soul, dogs recognised, not by mere intuition, but by force of intellect, their slave. I can see him surreptitiously passing forbidden delicacies from his plate to the silent watchers beneath the surface, his eyes disingenuously fixed upon the window to divert my mother's suspicions, and I can still hear his leisurely

histories of two imaginary South African Lion-slayers, named, with a massive simplicity, Smith and Brown, whose achievements were for us, as children, the last possibility of romance.

Children alone could extract from him the tales of various feats of his youth, feats in which, one supposes, the wild blood that was in him found its outlet and satisfaction; of the savage bull on to whose back he had dropped fron the branch of a tree, and whom he had then ridden in glory round and round the field; of the bulldog who jumped at the nose of a young half-trained Arab mare when my father was riding her, and caught it, and held on. And so did my father, while the mare flung herself into knots (and how either dog or man "held their howlt" it is hard to imagine). The bulldog was finally detached with a pitchfork by one Jerry Hegarty, who must himself have shown no mean skill and courage in adventuring into the whirl of that nightmare conflict, but my father sat it out. It was a daughter of that mare, named Lalla Rukh, a lovely grey (whom I can remember as a creature by me revered and adored, above, perhaps, any earthly thing), who was being ridden by my father through a town when they met a brass band. Lalla Rukh first attempted flight, but such was her confidence in her rider that, in the end, she let him ride her up to the big drum, and, in further token of devotion, she then, heroically, put her nose on it. One imagines that the big drummer was enough of a gentleman to refrain from his duties during those tense moments, but the rest of the band blazed on. My father was a boy of seventeen when he got his commission and was presently quartered at Birr, where he acted as Whip to the regimental pack of hounds. There is an authentic story of a hound,

that my grandfather sent to Birr, by rail and coach, escaping from the barracks, and making his way back to the kennels at Drishane. Birr is in King's County, and the journey, even across country, must be over a hundred miles. (These things being thus, it is hard to understand why any dog is ever lost.)

My father was in the Kaffir wars of 1843 and 1849, and fought right through the Crimean campaign, being one of the very few infantry officers who won all the clasps with the Crimean medal. One of his brother officers in the 68th Durham Light Infantry has told (I quote from an account published by the officer in question) " of an incident that shows the coolness and ready daring that characterised him. On the morning of the battle of Inkermann, 5th Nov., 1854, the 68th saw a body of troops moving close by. Owing to the fog it was impossible to distinguish if these were Russian or English. It was of the utmost importance, and the Colonel of the 68th exclaimed, ' What would I give to be able to decide ! '

" Without a pause Henry Somerville said, ' I'll soon let you know ! ' And, throwing open his grey military great-coat, he showed the scarlet uniform underneath.

" In a second a storm of rifle bullets answered the momentous question, thus speedily proving that enemies, and not friends, formed the advancing troops."

There is another story of my father's turning back, during a retirement up hill under heavy fire, at the battle of the Alma, to save a wounded private, whom he carried on his back out of danger. But not from him did we hear of these things. One of the few soldiering stories that I can recollect hearing from him was in connection with the fighting proclivities of his servant, Con Driscoll, a son of a

tenant who had followed him into the regiment. Con had been in a row of no small severity; his defence, as is not unusual, took the form of reflections upon the character of his adversary, and an exposition of his own self-restraint.

"If it wasn't that I knew me ordhers," he said, "and the di-*ship*lin' of the Sarvice, I wouldn't lave him till I danced on his shesht!"

CHAPTER VI

HER MOTHER

I HAVE spoken of that first cousinhood of seventy, the grandchildren of the Chief Justice, of whom my mother and Martin's were not the least notable members. I want to say something more of these two, and if such tales as Martin and I have remembered may seem sometimes to impinge upon the Fifth Commandment, I would, in apology, recall the old story of the masquerade at which Love cloaked himself in laughter, and was only discovered when he laughed till he cried, and they saw that the laughter was assumed, but the tears were real.

I have come upon a letter of my cousin Nannie's, undated, unfortunately, but its internal evidence, indicating for her an age not far exceeding seven years, would place it in or about the year 1830.

"*To Mrs. Charles Fox:*

"MY DEAR MAMA,

"I am very sorry for touching that stinking little cat. I'll try to-morrow and Teusday if I can do as happy and as well without touching Dawny. I had once before my birthday a little holiness in my heart and for two days I was trying to keep it in and I exceeded a little in it but alas one day Satan tempted me and one day I kept it out of my heart and then I

did not care what I did and I ware very bold. One day the week after that I tried without touching Dawny and I thought myself every bit as much happy but I was tempted tempted tempted another day: but I hope to-morrow morning I may be good Mama and that there will be one day that I may please Mama

"Your affectionate daughter
"NANNIE FOX."

The crime of which this is an expression of repentance is obscure. That the repentance was not untinged by indignation with the temptation is obvious; but why should she *not* have "touched Dawny"? I am reminded of a companion incident. A small boy, of whom I have the honour to be godmother, was privileged to come upon a *cache* of carpenter's tools, unhampered by the carpenter. He cut his fingers and was sent to bed. In the devotions which he subsequently offered up, the following clause was overheard,

"And please God, be more careful another time, and don't let me touch Willy Driscoll's tools."

A very just apportioning of the blame. My cousin Nannie put it all upon Satan, who was the more fashionable deity of her period.

I remember that my aunt Florence Coghill sat up for the whole of one night, verifying from her Bible the existence of the devil; a fact that had been called in question by a reprobate nephew. She came down to breakfast wan, but triumphant, and flung texts upon the nephew, even as the shields were cast upon Tarpeia.

Martin had many stories of her mother, which, alas! she has not written down. Many of them related to the time when they were living in Dublin,

and with all humility, and with apologies for possible error, I will try to remember some of them. Mrs. Martin was then a large and handsome lady of imposing presence, slow-moving, stately, and, in spite of a very genial manner, distinctly of a presence to inspire respect. It was alleged by her graceless family that only by aligning her with some fixed and distant object, and by close observation of the one in relation to the other, was it possible to see her move. (One of the stories turned on the mistake of one of her children, short-sighted like herself. "Oh, there's Mamma coming at last!" A pause. Then, in tones of disappointment, "No, it's only the tramcar!")

Martin once wrote that "the essence of good housekeeping is to make people eat things that they naturally dislike. Ingredients that must, for the sacred sake of economy, be utilised, are rarely attractive, but the good housekeeper can send the most nauseous of them to heaven, in a curry, as in a chariot of fire."

It must be admitted that neither artistic housekeeping, nor even the lower branches of the art, were my cousin Nannie's strong suit. It is related of her that one day, returning from a tea-party, she remembered that her household lacked some minor need. Undeterred by her tea-party splendour of attire, she sailed serenely into a small and unknown grocer's shop in quest of what she needed. The grocer, stout and middle-aged, lolled on his fat bare arms on the counter, reading a newspaper. He negligently produced the requirement, received the payment for it, and then, remarking affably, "Ta ta, me child!" returned to his paper.

My cousin Nannie, whose sense of the ridiculous could afflict her like an illness, tottered home in tearful ecstasies, and was only less shattered by the condescension of the grocer than by another tribute,

somewhat similar in kind. She had a singularly small and well-shaped foot; a fact to which her son Robert was wont to attribute the peculiarity that her shoe-strings were rarely securely fastened, involving her in an appeal to the nearest man to tie them. She returned to her family one day and related with joy how, as she passed a cabstand, her shoe lace had become unfastened, and how she had then asked a cabman to tie it for her. She thanked him with her usual and special skill in such matters, and, as she slowly moved away, she was pleased to hear her cabman remark to a fellow:

"That's a dam pleshant owld heifer!"

And the response of the fellow:

"Ah, Shakespeare says ye'll always know a rale lady when ye see her."

Her love for society was only matched by her intolerance of being bored. There was a recess in her bedroom, possessed of a small window and a heavy curtain. To this one day, on hearing a ring at the door, she hurriedly repaired, and took with her a chair and a book. She heard the travelling foot of the maid, searching for her. Then the curtain was pushed aside and the maid's face appeared.

"Oh, is it *there* you are!" said the maid, with the satisfaction of the finder in a game of hide and seek. That her mistress did not dash her book in her face speaks well for her self-control.

It may be urged that Mrs. Martin might have spared herself this discomfiture by the simpler expedient of leaving directions that she was "Not at Home." But this shows how little the present generation can appreciate the consciences of the last. I have known my mother to rush into the garden on a wet day, in order that the servant might truthfully say she was "out."

"Ah, Ma'am, 't was too much trouble you put on yourself," said the devoted retainer for whom the sacrifice was made. "God knows I'd tell a bigger lie than that for you! And be glad to do it!" (which was probably true, if only from the artist's point of view).

Mrs. Martin's contempt for danger was one of the many points wherein she differed from the average woman of her time. Indeed, it cannot be said that she despised it, as, quite obviously, she enjoyed it. Martin has told of how she and her mother were caught in a storm, in a small boat, on Lough Corrib. Things became serious; one boatman dropped his oar and prayed, the other wept but continued to row; Martin, who had not been bred to boats on Ross Lake for nothing, tugged at the abandoned oar of the supplicant. Meanwhile her mother sat erect in the stern, looking on the tempest in as unshaken a mood as Shakespeare could have desired, and enjoying every moment of it. Neither where horses were concerned did she know fear. I have been with her in a landau, with one horse trying to bolt, while the other had kicked till it got a leg over the trace. Help was at hand, and during the readjustment Mrs. Martin firmly retained her seat. Her only anxiety was lest the drive might have to be given up, her only regret that both horses had not bolted. She said she liked driving at a good round pace. An outside-car might do anything short of lying down and rolling, without being able to shake her off; her son Robert used to say of her that on an outside-car his mother's grasp of the situation was analogous to that of a poached egg on toast—both being practically undetachable.

How different was she from her first cousin, my mother, who, frankly mid-Victorian, proclaimed her-

self a coward, without a blush, even with ostentation. When the much-used label, "Mid-Victorian," is applied, it calls up, in my mind at least, a type of which the three primary causes are, John Leech's pictures, "The Newcomes," and Anthony Trollope's massive output. Pondering over these signs of that time, I withdraw the label from my mother and her compeers. Either must that be done, or the letter "i" substituted for the "a" in label. Let us think for a moment of Mrs. Proudie, of "The Campaigner"; of Eleanor, "The Warden's" daughter, who bursts into floods of tears as a solution to all situations; of the insufferable Amelia Osborne. Consider John Leech's females, the young ones, turbaned and crinolined, wholly idiotic, flying with an equal terror from bulls and mice, ogling Lord Dundreary and his whiskers, being scored off by rude little boys. And the elderly women, whose age, if nothing else, marked them, in mid-Victorian times, as fit subjects for ridicule, invariably hideous, jealous, spiteful, nagging, and even more grossly imbecile than their juniors. Thackeray and Trollope between them poisoned the wells in the 'fifties, and the water has hardly cleared yet. Nevertheless, with however mutinous a mind their books are approached, their supreme skill, their great authority, cannot be withstood; their odious women must needs be authentic. I am therefore forced to the conclusion that Martin's mother, and mine, and their sisters, and their cousins and their aunts were exceptions to the rule that all mid-Victorian women were cats, and I can only deposit the matter upon that crowded ash-heap, that vast parcel-office, adored of the bromidic, "the knees of the Gods," there to be left till called for.

* * * * *

There is a song that my mother used to sing to us

when we were children, of which I can now remember only fragments, but what I can recall of it is so beautifully typical of the early Victorian young lady, and of what may be called the Bonnet and Shawl attitude towards the Lover, that a verse or two shall be transcribed. I believe it used to be sung at the house of my grandmother (Anna Maria Coghill, *née* Bushe), in Cheltenham, by one of the many literary and artistic dandies who hung about her and her handsome daughters. Lord Lytton, then Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, was one of these, and he and my grandmother were among the first amateur experimenters in mesmerism, thought-reading, and clairvoyance, as might have been expected from the future author of "Zanoni," and from the mother of my mother (who was wont, with her usual entire frankness, to declare herself "the most curious person in the world," *i.e.* the most inquisitive).

I do not know the name of the song or of its composer. It has a most suitable, whining, peevish little tune; my mother used to sing it to us with intense dramatic expression, and it was considered to be a failure if the last verse did not leave my brother and me dissolved in tears. The song is in the form of a dialogue between the Lady and the Lover, and the Lady begins:

"So so so, Sir, you've come at last!
I thought you'd come no more,
I've waited with my bonnet on
From one till half-past four!
You know I hate to sit at home
Uncertain where to go,
You'll break my heart, I know you will,
If you continue so!"

(The tune demands the repetition of the last two lines, but it, I regret to say, cannot be given here.)

One sees her drooping on a high chair by the window (which of course is closed), her ringlets losing their curl, her cheeks their colour. The Lover takes a high hand.

"Pooh! pooh! my dear! Dry up your tears," he begins, arrogantly, and goes on to ask for trouble by explaining that the delay was caused by his having come "down Grosvenor Gate Miss Fanny's eye to catch," and he ends with defiance—

> "I won't, I swear, I *won't* be made
> To keep time like a watch!"

The Lady replies:

> "What! Fanny Grey! Ah, now indeed
> I understand it all!
> I saw you making love to her
> At Lady Gossip's ball!"
> "My life, my soul! My dearest Jane!
> I love but you alone!
> I never *thought* of Fanny Grey!
> (How tiresome she's grown!)
> I *never* thought of Fanny Grey!
> (How *tiresome* she's grown!)"

The last phrase an aside to the moved audience. "She" was his so-called "dearest Jane"! We thrilled at the perfidy, which lost nothing from my mother's delivery.

And then poor Jane's reproaches, and his impudent defence.

> "Oh Charles, I wonder that the earth
> Don't open where you stand!
> By the Heaven that's above us both,
> I saw you kiss her hand!"
> "You didn't dear, and if you did,
> Supposing it is true,
> When a pretty woman shows her rings
> What *can* a poor man do!"

But it was always the last lines of the last verse that touched the fount of tears. Charles, with specious excuses, has made his farewells; she watches him from the window (still closed, no doubt).

"Goodbye, goodbye, we'll meet again
On one of these fine days!"

he has warbled and departed. And then her cry (to the audience):

"He's *turned* the street, I knew he would!
He's gone to Fanny Grey's!
He's turned the street, I *knew* he would,
He's gone—to Fanny Grey's!"

I shall never forget that absurd tune, and its final feeble wail of despair; and inextricably blended with it is the memory of how lusciously my brother and I used to weep, even while we clamoured for an encore.

CHAPTER VII

MY MOTHER

THE men and women, but more specially the women, of my mother's family and generation are a lost pattern, a vanished type.

I once read a fragment, by John Davidson, that appeared some years ago in the *Outlook*. I grieve that I have lost the copy and do not remember its date. It was called, if I am not mistaken, "The Last of the Alanadoths," and purported to be the final page of the history of a great and marvellous tribe, whose stature was twice that of ordinary beings, whose strength was as the strength of ten, and in whose veins blue and glittering flame ran, instead of blood. These, having in various ways successfully staggered ordinary humanity, all finally embarked upon an ice-floe, and were lost in the Polar mists. "Thus perished," ends the chronicle, "the splendid and puissant Alanadoths!"

I have now forgotten many of the details, but I remember that when I read it, it irresistibly suggested to me the thought of my mother and her sisters and brothers. Tall, and fervent, and flaming, full of what seemed like quenchless vitality, their blood, if not flame, yet of that most ardent blend of Irish and English that has produced the finest fighters in the world. And now, like the splendid and puissant

Alanadoths, they also have vanished (save one, the stoutest fighter of them all) into the mists that shroud the borderland between our life and the next.

They kept their youthful outlook undimmed, and took all things in their stride, without introspection or hesitation. Their unflinching conscientiousness, their violent church-going (I speak of the sisters), were accompanied by a whole-souled love of a spree, and a wonderful gift for a row. Or for an argument. There are many who still remember those great arguments that, on the smallest provocation, would rise, and stir, and deepen, and grow, burgeoning like a rose of storm among the Alanadoths. They meant little at the moment, and nothing afterwards, but while they lasted they were awe-inspiring. It is said that a stranger, without their gates, heard from afar one such dispute, and trembling, asked what it might mean.

"Oh, *that!*" said a little girl, with *sang-froid*, "That's only the Coghills roaring."

(As a dweller in the Hebrides would speak of a North-Atlantic storm.)

My mother was a person entirely original in her candour, and with a point of view quite untrammelled by convention. Martin and I have ever been careful to abstain from introducing portraiture or caricature into our books, but we have not denied that the character of "Lady Dysart" (in "The Real Charlotte") was largely inspired by my mother.

She, as we said of Lady Dysart, said the things that other people were afraid to think.

"Poetry!" she declaimed, "I *hate* poetry—at least *good* poetry!"

Her common sense often amounted to inspiration. It happened one Christmas that my sister and I found ourselves in difficulties in the matter of a

suitable offering to an old servant of forty years' standing; she was living on a pension, her fancies were few, her needs none. A very difficult subject for benefaction. My mother, however, unhesitatingly propounded a suggestion.

"Give her a nice shroud! There's nothing in the world she'd like as well as that!"

Which was probably true, but was a counsel of perfection that we were too feeble to accept.

It is indeed indisputable that my mother breathed easily a larger air than the lungs of her children could compete with. Handsome, impetuous, generous, high-spirited, yet with the softest and most easily-entreated heart, she was like a summer day, with white clouds sailing high in a clear sky, and a big wind blowing. Hers was the gift of becoming, without conscious effort, the rallying point of any entertainment. It was she who never failed to supply the saving salt of a dull dinner-party; her inveterate *joie-de-vivre* made a radiance that struck responsive sparkles from her surroundings, whatever they might be.

She was a brilliant pianiste, and played with the same spirit with which she tackled the other affairs of life. She was renowned as an accompanist, having been trained to that most onerous and perilous office by an accomplished and exacting elder brother—and nothing can be as relentlessly exacting as a brother who sings—and she had a gift of reading music, with entire facility, that is as rare among amateurs as it is precious.

Music, books, pictures, politics, were in her blood. Music, with plenty of tune; painting, with plenty of colour and a rigid adherence to fact; novels, compact of love-making; and politics, of the most implacable party brand. Alas! she did not live to see many of our books, but I fear that such as she did see, with

their culpable economy of either love-makings or happy endings, were a disappointment to her. In her opinion the characters should leave a story, as the occupants left Noah's Ark, in couples. I remember the indignation in her voice when, having finished reading "An Irish Cousin," she said:

"But you never said who Mimi Burke married."

Those who have done us the honour of reading that early work will, I think, admit that our description of Miss Mimi Burke might have exonerated us from the necessity of providing her with a husband.

My mother was one of the most thorough and satisfying letter-writers of a family skilled in that art, having in a high degree the true instinct in the matter of material, and knowing how to separate the wheat from the chaff (and—*bien entendu*—to give the preference to the chaff). She was a Woman Suffragist, unfaltering, firm, and logical; a philanthropist, practical and energetic.

"Where'd we be at all if it wasn't for the Colonel's Big Lady!" said the hungry country women, in the Bad Times, scurrying, barefooted, to her in any emergency, to be fed and doctored and scolded. She was a Spiritualist, wide-minded, eager, rejoicing in the occult, mysterious side of things, with the same enthusiasm with which she faced her sunshiny everyday life. Not that it was all sunshine. My grandfather, Thomas Somerville, of Drishane, died in 1882. With him, as Martin has said of his contemporary, her father, passed the last of the old order, the unquestioned lords of the land. Mr. Gladstone's successive Land Acts were steadily making themselves felt, and my father and mother, like many another Irish father and mother, began to learn what it was to have, as a tenant said of himself, "a long serious family, and God knows how I'll make the two ends of the candle meet!"

FROM THE GARDEN, DRISHANE. V. F. M.

DRISHANE HOUSE. V. F. M.

HYDRANGEAS, DRISHANE AVENUE. V. F. M.

I marvel now, when I think of their courage and their gallant self-denial. The long, but far from serious, family, numbering no less than five sons and two daughters, thought little of Land Acts at the time, and took life as lightly as ever. The stable was cut down, but there were no hounds then, and I was in the delirium of a first break into oil colours, after a spring spent in Paris in drawing and painting, and even horses were negligible quantities. There was no change made in the destined professions for the sons; it was on themselves that my father and mother economised; and with effort, and forethought, and sheer self-denial, somehow they "made good," and pulled through those bad years of the early 'eighties, when rents were unpaid, and crops failed, and Parnell and his wolf-pack were out for blood, and the English Government flung them, bit by bit, the property of the only men in Ireland who, faithful to the pitch of folly, had supported it since the days of the Union. When the Russian woman threw the babies to the wolves, at least they were her own.

I have claimed for my mother moral courage and self-denial, and, in making good that claim, said that the stable establishment at Drishane—never a large one—had been cut down. I feel I ought to admit that this particular economy cannot be said to have afflicted her. She had an unassailable conviction that every horse was "at heart a rake." Though she was not specially active, no rabbit could bolt before a ferret more instantaneously than she from a carriage at the first wink of one of the "bright eyes of danger." No horse was quiet enough for her, few were too old.

"Slugs?" she has said, in defence of her carriage-horses, "I *love* slugs! I adore them! And slugs or no, I will *not* be driven by B——" (a massive sailor

son). "He's no more use on the box than a blue bottle!"

There was an occasion when she was discovered halfway up a ladder, faintly endeavouring to hang a picture, and unable to do so by reason of physical terror. She was restored to safety, and with recovered vigour she countered reproaches with the singular yet pertinent inquiry: "*May* I ask, *am* I a paralysed babe?"

Her similes were generally unexpected, but were invariably to the point. It often pleases me to try to recall some of the flowers of fancy that she has lavished upon my personal appearance. I think I should begin by saying that her ideal daughter had been denied to her. This being should have had hair of dazzling gold, blue eyes as big as mill-wheels, and should have been incessantly enmeshed in the most lurid flirtation. My eyes did indeed begin by being blue, but, as was said by an old nurse who held by the Somerville tradition of brown ones,

"By the help of the Lord they'll change!"

They did change, but as the assistance was withdrawn when they had merely attained to a non-committal grey, neither in eyes, nor in the other conditions, did I gratify my mother's aspirations.

I have been at a dinner-party with her, and have found, to my great discomfort, her eyes dwelling heavily upon my head. Her face wore openly the expression of a soul in torment. I knew that in some way, dark to me, I was the cause. After dinner she took an early opportunity of assuring me that my appearance had made her long to go under the dinner-table.

"Never," she said, "have I seen your hair so abominable. It was like a collection of filthy little furze-bushes."

Which was distressing enough, but not more so than being told on a similar occasion, and, I think, for similar reasons, that I was "not like any human young lady," and again, she has seriously, even with agony, informed me that I was "the Disgrace of Castle Townshend!"

It was a sounding title, with something historic and splendid about it.

"The Butcher of Anjou!" "The Curse of Cromwell!" occur to me as parallel instances.

It was my privilege—sometimes, I think, my misfortune—to have succeeded my mother as the unofficial player of the organ in Castlehaven Church, and her criticisms of the music, and specially of the choir, were as unfailing as unsparing.

"They sang like infuriated pea-hens! Never have I heard such a collection of screech-cats! You should have drowned them with the great diapason!"

Not long ago, among some of her papers, I found a home-made copybook, of blue foolscap paper, with lines very irregularly ruled on it, and, on the lines, still more irregular phalanxes of "pothooks and hangers." Further investigation discovered my own name, and a date that placed me at something under six years old; and at the foot of each page was my mother's careful and considered judgment upon my efforts. "Middling," "Careless," "Bobbish," "Naughty," "Abominable," and then a black day, when it was written, plain for all men to see, that I was not only abominable, but also naughty.

"Naughty and Abominable," there it stands, and shows not only my early criminality, but my mother's enchanting sincerity. What young mamma, of five or six and twenty, is there to-day who would thus faithfully allot praise or blame to her young. I feel safe in saying that the naughtier and more abominable

the copy, the more inevitably would it be described as either killing or sweet.

In reference to this special page, I may add that, although I regard myself as a reliable opinion in calligraphy, I am unable to detect any perceptible difference between the pothooks and hangers of the occasion when I was bobbish, or those of that day of wrath when I was both naughty and abominable.

Amongst other episodes I cherish an unforgettable picture of my mother having her fortune told by her hand. (A criminal act, as we have recently learned, and one that under our enlightened laws might have involved heavy penalties.)

The Sibyl was a little lady endowed with an unusual share of that special variety of psychic faculty that makes the cheiromant, and also with a gift, almost rarer, of genuine enthusiasm for the good qualities of others, an innocent and whole-souled creator and worshipper of heroes, if ever there were one. To her did my mother confide her hand, her pretty hand, with the shell pink palm, and the blush on the Mount of Venus, that she had inherited from her mother, the Chief's daughter.

"*Intensely* nervous!" pronounced the Sibyl (who habitually talked in italics and a lovable Cork brogue), looking at the maze of delicate lines that indicate the high-strung temperament. "*Adores* her children!"

"Not a bit of it!" says my mother, flinging up her head, in a way she had, like a stag, and regarding with a dauntless eye her two grinning daughters.

The Sibyl swept on, dealing with line and mount and star, going from strength to strength in the exposition till, at the line of the heart, she came to a dead set.

"Oh, Mrs. Somerville! *What* do I see? *Count*less flirtations!! And Oh—" (a long squeal of sympathy

and excitement) "*Four!* Yes! One—Two—*Three*—FOUR Great Passions!"

At this the ecstasy of my mother knew no bounds. "Four, Miss X.! Are you *sure?*"

Miss X. was certain. She expounded and amplified, and having put the Four Great Passions on a basis of rock, proceeded with her elucidation of lesser matters; but it was evident that my mother's attention was no longer hers.

"I'm trying to remember who the Four Passions were," she said that evening to one of her first cousins (who might be supposed to know something of her guilty past), and to my sister, "There was Charlie B——. He'll do for one—and L. W.——!—that's two—and then—Oh, yes!—then there was S. B——! Minnie! *Was* I in love with S. B——?" She paused for an answer that her cousin was incapable, for more reasons than the obvious one, of giving.

My mother resumed the delicious inquiry.

"Well—" she said, musingly, "Anyhow, that's only three. Now, *who* was the fourth?"

My sister Hildegarde, who was young and inclined to be romantic, said languishingly,

"Why, of course it was *Papa*, Mother!"

My father and mother's mutual love and devotion were as delightful an example of what twenty-five years of happy married life bestows as can well be conceived, and I think Hildegarde was justified. My mother, however, regarded her with wide open blue eyes, almost sightless from the dazzle of dreams—dreams of the four reckless and dangerous beings who had galloped, hopeless and frenzied, into darkness (not to say oblivion) for love of her—dreams of her own passionate, heartbroken despair when they had thus galloped.

"What? . . . What? . . ." she demanded, be-

wilderedly, sitting erect, with eyes like stars, looking as Juno might have looked had her peacock turned upon her, "*What* do you say ?"

"There was Papa, Mother," repeated Hildegarde firmly, but not (she says) reprovingly, "*He* was the fourth, of course !"

"*Papa ? ? ?* . . ."

The preposterous dowdiness of this suggestion almost deprived my mother of the power of speech.

"*Papa !* . . . Paugh !"

* * * * *

Thus did the splendid and puissant Alanadoths dispose of the cobweb conventions of mere mortals.

CHAPTER VIII

HERSELF

"It was on a Sunday, the eleventh day of a lovely June," her sister, Mrs. Edward Hewson, has written, "that Violet entered the family. A time of roses, when Ross was at its best, with its delightful old-fashioned gardens fragrant with midsummer flowers, and its shady walks at their darkest and greenest as they wandered through deep laurel groves to the lake. She was the eleventh daughter that had been born to the house, and she received a cold welcome.

"'I am glad the Misthress is well,' said old Thady Connor, the steward; 'but I am sorry for other news.'

"I think my father's feelings were the same, but he said she was 'a pretty little child.' My mother comforted herself with the reflection that girls were cheaper than boys.

"At a year old she was the prettiest child I ever saw, with her glorious dark eyes, and golden hair, and lovely colour; a dear little child, but quite unnoticed in the nursery. Charlie was the child brought forward. I think the unnoticed childhood had its effect. She lived her own life apart. Then came the reign of the Governesses, and their delight in her. I never remember the time she could not read, and she played the piano at four years old very well. (At twelve

years old she took first prize for piano-playing at an open competition, held in Dublin, for girls up to eighteen.)

"Her great delight at four or five years old was to slip into the drawing-room and read the illustrated editions of the poets. Her favourite was an edition of Milton, with terrifying pictures; this she read with delight. One day there was an afternoon party, and, as usual, Violet stole into the drawing-room and was quickly engrossed in her loved Milton, entirely oblivious of the company. Later on, she was found fast asleep, with her head resting on the large volume. The scene is present with me; the rosy little face, and the golden hair resting on the book.

"I remember that Henry H—— said 'Some day I shall boast that I knew Violet as a child!'"

She was christened Violet Florence, by her mother's cousin, Lord Plunket, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, in the drawing-room at Ross, the vessel employed for the rite being, she has assured me, the silver slop-basin, and at Ross she spent the first ten happy years of her life.

I, also, had a happy childhood, full of horses and dogs and boats and dangers (which latter are the glory of life to any respectable child with suitable opportunity), but after I had seen Ross I could almost have envied Martin and her brother, Charlie, nearest to her in age, their suzerainty over Ross demesne.

"I thravelled Ireland," said someone, "and afther all, there's great heart in the County of Cork!", and I am faithful to my own county; but there is a special magic in Galway, in its people and in its scenery, and for me, Ross, and its lake and its woods, is Galway. The beauty of Ross is past praising. I think of it as I saw it first, on a pensive evening of early spring, still and grey, with a yellow spear-head of light low

in the west. Still and grey was the lake, too, with the brown mountain, Croagh-Keenan, and the grey sky, with that spear-thrust of yellow light in it, lying deep in the wide, quiet water, that was furrowed now and then by the flapping rush of a coot, or streaked with the meditative drift of a wild duck; farther back came the tall battalions of reeds, thronging in pale multitudes back to the shadowy woods; and for foreground, the beautiful, broken line of the shore, with huge boulders of limestone scattered on it, making black blots in the pearl-grey of the shallows.

On higher ground above the lake stands the old house, tall and severe, a sentinel that keeps several eyes, all of them intimidating, on all around it. The woods of Annagh, of Bullivawnen, of Cluinamurnyeen, trail down to the lake side, with spaces of grass, and spaces of hazel, and spaces of bog among them. I have called the limestone boulders blots, but that was on an evening in February; if you were to see them on a bright spring morning, as they lie among primroses at the lip of the lake, you would think them a decoration, a collar of gems, that respond to the suggestions of the sky, and are blue, or purple, or grey, bright or sullen, as it requires of them. Things, also, to make a child delirious with their possibilities. One might jump from one huge stone to another, till, especially in a dry summer when the lake was low, one might find oneself far out, beyond even the Turf Quay, or Swans' Island, whence nothing but one's own prowess could ever restore one to home and family. If other stimulant were needed, it was supplied by the thought of the giant pike, who were known to inhabit the outer depths. One of them, stuffed and varnished, honoured the hall at Ross with its presence. It looked big and wicked enough to pull down a small girl as easily as a minnow.

When I first went to Ross, a grown-up young woman, I found that seduction of the boulders, and of the chain of leaps that they suggested, very potent. The attraction of the pike also was not to be denied. (We used to try to shoot them with a shot-gun, and sometimes succeeded.) What then must the lake not have meant to its own children ?

I don't suppose that any little girl ever had more accidents than Martin. Entirely fearless and reckless, and desperately short-sighted, full of emulation and the irrepressible love of a lark, scrapes, in the physical as well as the moral sense, were her daily portion, and how she came through, as she did, with nothing worse than a few unnoticeable scars to commemorate her many disasters, is a fact known only to her painstaking guardian angel. Tenants, who came to Ross on their various affairs, found their horses snatched to be galloped by " the children," their donkeys purloined for like purposes (or the donkeys' nearest equivalent to a gallop)—and it may be noted that the harder the victimised horses were galloped, the more profound was the admiration, even the exultation, of their owners.

" Sure," said a southern woman of some children renowned for their naughtiness, " them's very arch childhren. But, afther all, I dunno what's the use of havin' childhren if they're not arch ! "

In certain of the essays in one of our books, " Some Irish Yesterdays," we have pooled memories of our respective childhoods, which, fortunately, perhaps, for the peace of nations, were separated by some hundred miles of moor and mountain, as well as by an interval of years. Their conditions were similar in many respects, and specially so in the government of the nursery. Our mothers, if their nurses satisfied their requirements, had a large indifference to the

antecedents of the nurses' underlings, who were usually beings of the type that is caught at large on a turf-bog and imported raw into the ministry. One such was once described to me—" An innocent, good-natured slob of a gerr'l that was rared in a bog beside me. The sort of gerr'l now that if you were sick would sit up all night to look afther ye, and if you weren't, she'd lie in bed all day ! "

I believe the nurses enjoyed the assimilation of the raw product, much as a groom likes the interest afforded by an unbroken colt, and they found the patronage among the mothers of the disciples a useful asset. In later years, Martin was discoursing of her nursery life, with her foster-mother, who had also been her nurse, Nurse B., a most agreeable person, gifted with a saturnine humour that is not infrequent in our countrywomen.

" Sure didn't I ketch Kit Sal one time "—(the reigning nursemaid)—" an' she bating and kicking yerself on the avenue ! " Nurse B. began. She then went on to describe how she had fallen on Kit Sal, torn her hair, and " shtuck her teeth in her."

" The Misthress seen me aftherwards, and she axed me what was on me, for sure I was cryin' with the rage. ' Nothin' Ma'am ! ' says I. But I told her two days afther, an' she goes to Kit Sal, an' says she, ' What call had you to bate Miss Wilet ? ' says she, ' Ye big shtump ! ' ' She wouldn't folly me,' says Kit. ' Well indeed,' says the Misthress, ' I believe ye got a bigger batin' yerself from Nurse, and as far as that goes,' says she, ' I declare to God,' says she, ' I wish she dhrank yer blood ! ' says she.''

The tale is above comment, but for those who knew Mrs. Martin's very special distinction of manner and language, it has a peculiar appeal.

Nurse B. was small, spare, and erect, with a manner

that did not conceal her contempt for the world at large—(with one cherished exception, "Miss Wilet")—and a trenchancy of speech that was not infrequently permitted to express it. At Ross, at lunch one day, during the later time when Mrs. Martin had returned there, the then cat—(the pampered and resented drawing-room lady, not the mere kitchen cat)—exhibited a more than usually inordinate greediness, and Mrs. Martin appealed, with some reproach, to Nurse B., who was at that time acting—and the word may be taken in its stage connection—the part of parlour-maid.

"Nurse! *Does* this poor cat *ever* get *anything* to eat?"

"It'd be the quare cat if it didn't!" replied Nurse, with a single glance at "Miss Wilet" to claim the victor's laurel.

* * * * *

It was not until Martin and I began to write "The Real Charlotte" that I understood how wide and varied a course of instruction was to be obtained in a Dublin Sunday school. Judging by a large collection of heavily-gilded books, quite unreadable (and quite unread), each of which celebrates proficiency in some branch of scriptural learning, Martin took all the available prizes. In addition to these trophies and the knowledge they implied, she learnt much of that middle sphere of human existence that has practically no normal points of contact with any other class, either above or below it.

It was a rather risky experiment, as will, I think, be admitted by anyone who considers the manners and customs of the detestable little boys and girls who squabble and giggle in the first chapter of "The Real Charlotte." There are not many children who could have come unscathed out of such a furnace.

There is a story of a priest who was such a good man that he "went through Purgatory like a flash of lightning. There wasn't a singe on him!"

Martin was adored, revered, was received as an oracle by her fellow scholars, and was, as was invariable with her, the wonder and admiration of her teacher. She has told me how she took part in dreadful revels, school feasts and the like, which, in their profound aloofness from her home-life, had something almost illicit about them. With her intensely receptive, perceptive brain, she was absorbing impressions, points of view, turns and twists of character wrought on by circumstance; yet, when that phase of her childhood had passed, "there wasn't a singe on her!"

She had a spiritual reserve and seriousness that shielded her, like an armour of polished steel that reflects all, and is impenetrable. Refinement was surpassingly hers; intellectual refinement, a mental fastidiousness that rejected inevitably the phrase or sentiment that had a tinge of commonness; personal refinement, in her dress, in the exquisite precision of all her equipment; physical refinement, in the silken softness of her hair, the slender fineness of her hands and feet, the flower-bloom of her skin; and over and above all, she had the refinement of sentiment, which, when it is joined with a profound sensitiveness and power of emotion, has a beauty and a perfectness scarcely to be expressed in words.

She has told me stories of those times, and of the curious contrasts of her environment. Long, confidential walks with "Francie Fitzpatrick" and her fellows, followed by an abrupt descent from the position of "Sir Oracle," to the status of the youngest of a number of sisters and brothers whose cleverness, smartness, and good looks filled her with awe and

glory. She was intensely critical and intensely appreciative. The little slender brown-eyed girl, who was part pet, part fag of that brilliant, free-going, family crowd, secretly appraised them all in her balancing, deliberative mind, and, fortunately for all concerned, passed them sound. They taught her to brush their hair, and read her the poets while she was thus employed; they chaffed her, and called her The Little Philosopher, and unlike many elder sisters—(and I speak as an elder sister)—dragged her into things instead of keeping her out of them. It must have been a delightful house, full of good looks and good company. I was far away in South Cork, and knew of the Martins but distantly and dimly; after my eldest brother had met them and returned to chant their charms, I think that a certain faint hostility tinged my very occasional thoughts of them, which, after all, is not unusual.

The Martins' house in Dublin was one of the gathering places for the clans of the family. Dublin society still existed in those days; things went with a swing, and there was a tingle in life. Probably there was no place in the kingdom where a greater number of pleasant people were to be met with. Jovial, unconventional, radiant with good looks, unfailing in agreeability, they hunted, they danced, they got up theatricals and concerts, they—the elder ones, at least—went to church with an equal enthusiasm, and fought to the death over the relative merits of their pet parsons.

Martin has told me of a Homeric and typical battle of which she was a spectator, between her mother and one of my many aunts, Florence Coghill. It began at tea, at the house of another aunt, with a suave and academic discussion of the Irish Episcopate, and narrowed a little to the fact that the

diocese of Cork needed a bishop. My aunt Florence said easily,

"Oh—Gregg, of course!"

My cousin Nannie (Mrs. Martin) replied with a sweet reasonableness, yet firmly, "I think you will find that Pakenham Walsh is the man."

The battle then was joined. From argument it passed on into shouting, and thence neared fisticuffs. They advanced towards each other in large armchairs, even as, in these later days, the "Tanks" move into action. They beat each other's knees, each lady crying the name of her champion, and then my aunt remembered that she had a train to catch, and rushed from the room. The air was still trembling with her departure, when the door was part opened, the monosyllable "Gregg!" was projected through the aperture, and before reply was possible, the slam of the hall door was heard.

Mrs. Martin flung herself upon the window, and was in time to scream "Paknamwalsh!" in one tense syllable, to my aunt's departing long, thin back.

My aunt Florence was too gallant a foe to affect, as at the distance she might well have done, unconsciousness. Anyone who knows the deaf and dumb alphabet will realise what conquering gestures were hers, as turning to face the enemy she responded,

"G! R! E! G! G!"

and with the last triumphant thump of her clenched fists, fled round the corner.

And she was right. "Gregg & son, Bishops to the Church of Ireland," have passed into ecclesiastical history.

CHAPTER IX

MYSELF, WHEN YOUNG

I HAVE deeply considered the question as to how far and how deep I should go in the matter of my experiences as an Art student. Those brief but intense visits to Paris come back to me as almost the best times that life has given me. To be young, and very ardent, and to achieve what you have most desired, and to find that it brings full measure and running over—all those privileges were mine. I may have taken my hand from the plough, and tried to "*cultiver mon jardin*" in other of the fields of Paradise, but if I did indeed loose my hand from its first grasp, it was to place it in another, in the hand of the best comrade, and the gayest playboy, and the faithfullest friend, that ever came to turn labour to pastime, and life into a song.

I believe that those who have been Art students themselves will sympathise with my recollections, and I trust that those who were not will tolerate them. If neither of these expectations is fulfilled, this chapter can be lightly skipped. The damage done on either side will be inconsiderable.

Drawing and riding seem to me to go farther back into my consciousness than any other of the facts of life. I cannot remember a time when I had not a pony and a pencil. I adored both about equally, and if I cannot, even now, draw a horse as I should

wish to do it—a fact of which I am but too well aware—it is not for want of beginning early and trying often.

My education in Art has been somewhat spasmodic. I think I was about seventeen when a dazzling invitation came for me from a very much loved aunt who was also my godmother, to stay with her in London and to work for a term at the South Kensington School of Art. There followed three months of a most useful breaking-in for a rather headstrong and unbroken colt. I do not know what the present curriculum of South Kensington may be; I know what it was then. From a lawless life of caricaturing my brethren, my governesses, my clergy, my elders and betters generally, copying in pen and ink all the hunting pictures, from John Leech to Georgina Bowers, that old and new "Punches" had to offer, and painting such landscapes in water colours as would have induced the outraged earth to open its mouth and swallow up me and all my house, had it but seen them, I passed to a rule of iron discipline.

1. Decoration, scrolls and ornament in all moods and tenses.

2. The meticulous study in outline of casts of detached portions of the human frame, noses, ears, hands, feet; and

3. The most heart-breaking and time-wasting stippling of the same.

I well remember how, on a day that I was toiling at a large and knubbly foot, a full-rigged Mamma came sailing round the class, with a daughter in tow. The other students were occupied with scrolls and apples and the like. The Mamma shed gracious sanction as she passed. Then came my turn. I was aware of a pause, a shock of disapproval, and then the words,

" A *naked* foot, my dear ! "

There was a tug on the tow-rope and the daughter was removed.

I imagine it must have been near the end of my three months that my detested efforts were made into a bundle and sent up to high places with a scribble on the margin of one of them, " May Miss Somerville pass for the Antique ? E. Miller."

In due course the bundle was returned. Mr. Sparkes, a majestic and terrible being, wrapped in remoteness and in a great and waving red beard, as in a mantle of flame, had placed his sign of acquiescence after the inquiry. Miss Somerville was given to understand that she was permitted to Pass for the Antique.

This, however, Miss Somerville did not do. She was (not without deep regret for all of her London sojourn that did *not* include the School of Art) permitted instead to pass the portals of Paddington Station, and to return to Ireland by " The Bristol Boat," in other words, an instrument of the devil, much in vogue at that time among the Irish of the South, that took some thirty hours to paddle across the Channel, and was known to the wits of Cork as " The Steam Roller." It was, I fancy, on board the Steam Roller that a cousin of mine, when still deep in hard-earned slumber, and still far outside " The Heads " (*i.e.* the entrance of Cork Harbour), was assaulted by the steward.

" Come, get up, get up ! " said the steward, shaking him by the shoulder, with the licence of old acquaintance and authority.

My cousin replied with a recommendation to the steward to betake himself to a rival place of torment, where (he added) there was little the steward could learn, and much that he could teach.

"Well," replied the steward, dispassionately, "ye're partly right. Ye have an hour yet."

Thus I found myself back in Carbery again, left once more to follow my own buccaneering fancy in the domain of Art, a little straightened and corrected, perhaps, in eye, and with ideas on matters æsthetic beneficially widened. But this was due mainly to one who has ever been my patron saint in Art, that cousin who preferred reverie to Shakespeare; partly, also, to peripatetic lunches among the pictures and marvels of the South Kensington Museum; not, I say firmly, to that heavy-earned Pass for the Antique.

My next term of serious apprenticeship did not occur for four or five years, and was spent in Düsseldorf. One of my cousins (now my brother-in-law), Egerton Coghill, was studying painting there, and advised my doing the same. It was there, therefore, that I made my first dash into drawing from life, under the guidance of M. Gabriel Nicolet, then himself a student, now a well-known and successful portrait-painter. In the following spring I was there again, for singing lessons as well as for painting. This time I had Herr Carl Sohn for my professor, a delightful painter, who helped me much, but on the whole I think that I learnt more of music than of anything else while I was in Düsseldorf, and had I learnt nothing of either, I can at least look back to the concerts at the Ton Halle, and praise Heaven for the remembrance of their super-excellence. Twice a week came the concerts; it was very much the thing to go to them, and I have not often enjoyed music more than I have at those Ton Halle nights, sitting with the good friends whom Providence had considerately sent to Düsseldorf to be kind to me, in an atmosphere of rank German tobacco, listening to the best of orchestras, and enjoying every note

they played, while I covered my programme with caricatures (as, also, was very much the thing to do).

My friends and I joined one of the big Gesang Vereins, and a very good two months ended in three ecstatic days of singing alto in the Rheinische Musik Fest, which, by great good luck, took place that May in Düsseldorf.

The Abbé Liszt was one of the glories of the occasion. I saw him roving through the gardens of the Ton Halle, with an ignored train of admirers at his heels; an old lion, with a silver mane, and a dark, untamed eye.

I do not regret those two springs in Düsseldorf, but still less do I regret the change of counsels that resulted in my going to Paris in the following year. "When the true gods come, the half-gods go," and, apart from other considerations, the Düsseldorf School of Art only admitted male students, and ignored, with true German chivalry, the other half of creation.

Of old, we are told, Freedom sat on the heights, well above the snow line, no doubt, and, even in 1884, she was disposed to turn a freezing eye and a cold shoulder on any young woman who had the temerity to climb in her direction. My cousin, who had been painting in Düsseldorf, had moved on to Paris, and his reports of the studios there, as compared with the possibilities of work in Düsseldorf, settled the question for me. But the point was not carried without friction.

"Paris!"

They all said this at the tops of their voices. It does not specially matter now who they were; there are always people to say this kind of thing.

They said that Paris was the Scarlet Woman embodied; they also said,

" The IDEA of letting a GIRL go to PARIS ! "

This they said incessantly in capital letters, and in " capital letters " (they were renowned for writing " capital letters "), and my mother was frightened.

So a compromise was effected, and I went to Paris with a bodyguard, consisting of my mother, my eldest brother, a female cousin, and with us another girl, the friend with whom I had worked in Düsseldorf. We went to a *pension* in the Avenue de Villiers, which, I should imagine and hope, exists no more.

As I think of its gloomy and hideous *salons*, its atmosphere of garlic and bad cigars, its system of ventilation, which consisted of heated draughts that travelled from one stifling room to another, seeking an open window and finding none ; when I remember the thread-like passages, dark as in a coal mine, the clusters of tiny bedrooms, as thick as cells in a wasp's nest ; the endless yet inadequate meals, I recognise, with long overdue gratitude, the devotion of the bodyguard. For me and my fellow-student nothing of this signified. For us was the larger air, the engrossing toil of the studio. It absorbed us from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. But the wheels of the bodyguard drave heavily, and they had a poor time of it.

So poor indeed was it, that, after three weeks of conscientious sight-seeing and no afternoon tea (" Le Fife o'clock " not having then reached the shores of France), my mother decided it were better to leave me alone, sitting upon the very knee of the Scarlet Woman, than to endure the Avenue de Villiers any longer, and to fly back to what she was wont to describe to her offspring, if restive, as " your-own-good-home-and-what-more-do-you-want." (In this connection, I remember an argument I once had with her, in which, being young and merely theoretically affaired with the matter, I furiously asserted

my preference, even—as the fight warmed—my adoration, for the practice of cremation, and my unalterable resolve to be thus disposed of. My mother, who would rise to any argument, no less furiously combated the suggestion, and finally clinched the matter by saying, "Cremation! Nonsense! I can tell you, my fine friend, you shall just be popped into your own good family vault!")

With the departure of my people, May Goodhall and I also shook off as much of the dust of the Avenue de Villiers as was possible, and moved to another *pension*, nearly *vis-à-vis* the Studio. This latter was an offshoot of the well-known Atelier Colarossi. It had been started in the Rue Washington (Avenue des Champs Elysées) in order to secure English and American clients, as well as those French *jeunes filles bien élevées* to whose parents the studios of the Quartier Latin did not commend themselves. Its tone was distinctly amateur; we were all "*très bien élevées*" and "*très gentilles*," and in recognition of this, a sort of professional chaperon had been provided, a small, cross female, who made up the fire, posed the models, and fought with *les élèves* over the poses, and hatred for whom created a bond of union among all who came within her orbit. One of the French girls, Mlle. La C——, fair, smart, good-looking, bestowed upon me some degree of favour. The class was wont to do a weekly composition for correction by M. Dagnan-Bouveret, who was one of the professors; the subjects he selected were usually Scriptural, and Mlle. La C—— was accustomed to appeal to me for information. She was, I remember, quite at sea about *La fille de Jephté*, and explained that the Bible was a book not *convenable pour les jeunes filles*, whereas the Lives of the Saints were most interesting, and full of a thousand delicious little horrors. Without approaching Martin's Sunday

School erudition, I presently found myself established as the exponent of the composition. I recollect one week, when the subject was "The Maries at the Sepulchre," an obsequious German came to inquire "if eet was in ze morning zat ze holy Laties did co to ze tomb? Or did zose Laties, perhaps, co in ze efening?"

Mlle. la C——'s home chanced to be the house next but one to the Studio, and the Rue Washington was a street of a decorum appropriate to its name. None the less, a *bonne* came daily at 12 o'clock to escort her home for *déjeuner*. There came a day when the *bonne* failed of her mission, and on my return at one o'clock, I found my young friend (who was as old as she would ever, probably, admit to being) faint with hunger, and very angry, but too much afraid of the wrath of her family to return alone.

One wonders whether, even in provincial France, Freedom still denies herself to this extent.

In the following spring I went again to Paris, and this time, my friend May Goodhall being unfortunately unable to come with me, a very delightful American, and her friend, German by up-bringing, but of old French noble descent, allowed me to join their *ménage*. Its duties were divided according to our capacities. Marion A—— was housekeeper, "Ponce," by virtue of her German training, was cook, and to me was allotted the humble *rôle* of scullion. We had rooms in a tall and filthy old house in the Rue Madame, one of those sinister and dark and narrow streets that one finds in the Rive Gauche, that seem as if they must harbour all variety of horrors, known and unknown, and are composed of houses whose incredible discomforts would break the spirit of any creature less inveterate in optimism than an Art student. For Marion and Ponce and I had decided

to abandon the Rue Washington, and to go to what was known there as "*lè Colarossi là-bas*," the real, serious, professional studio (as opposed to its refined astral body, "*près l'Étoile*"), and we now felt ourselves Art students indeed.

I don't know how young women manage now, but in those days I and my fellows were usually given—like the Prodigal Son—a portion, a sum of money, which was to last for as long or as short a time as we pleased, but we knew that when it ended there would be no husks to fall back upon; nothing but one long note on the horn, "Home!", and home we should have to go. (I once ran it to so fine a point that I could buy no food between Paris and London, and when I arrived at my uncle's house in London, it was my long-suffering uncle who paid the cabman.)

Therefore, for the keen ones, the most stringent and profound economies were the rule. Never did I reveal to my father and mother more than the most carefully selected details of that house in the Rue Madame. I paid seven francs per week for my bedroom and *service*, and though this may not seem excessive, I am inclined now to think that the accommodation was dear at the money. My room, *au cinquième*, had a tiled floor, but this was of less consequence, as its size permitted of most of the affairs of life being conducted from a central and stationary position on the bed. Thence, I could shut the door, poke the fire, cook my breakfast, and open the window, a conventional rite, quite disconnected with the question of fresh air. The outlook was into a central shaft, full of darkness and windows, remarkable for the variety and pungency of its atmosphere, and for the fact that at no hour of the day or night did it cease to reverberate with the thunderous gabble of pianos, the acrid screeches of the violin—(to which

latter I contributed a not unworthy share)—and, worst of all, the Solfeggi of the embryo vocalist.

The *service* (comprised, it may be remembered, in the daily franc) consisted in the occasional offices of a male housemaid, whose professional visits could only be traced by the diminution of our hoarded supplies of English cigarettes. Yet he was not all evil. He reminded me of my own people at home in his readiness to perform any task that was not part of his duties, and a small coin would generally evoke hot water. Marion A——, who had retained, even in the Rue Madame, a domestic standard to which I never aspired, would, at intervals, offer Léon her opinion of him and his methods. The housemaid, with one of Ponce's cigarettes in the corner of his mouth, and one of mine behind his ear, would accept it in the best spirit possible, and once went so far as to assure her, with a charming smile, that he had now been so much and so very often scolded that he really did not mind it in the least.

Colarossi, the proprietor of the studios, was a wily and good-natured old Italian, who had been a model, and having saved money, had somehow acquired a nest of tumble-down studios in the Rue de la Grande Chaumière. He then bribed, with the promise of brilliant pupils, some rising artists to act as his "Professeurs," and secured, with the promise of brilliant professors, a satisfactory crowd of rising pupils, and by various arts he had succeeded in keeping both promises sufficiently to make his venture a success. The studio in which I worked was at the top of the building, and was reached by a very precarious, external wooden staircase; the men-students were on the ground-floor beneath us. "*Le Colarossi là-bas*" was indisputably serious. The models were well managed, as might be expected, when no trick

of the trade could hope to pass undetected by "*Le Patron*"; the students were there to work, and to do good work at that, and the women's and men's studios were all crowded with "*les sérieux.*" Raphael Collin, gloomy, pale, pock-marked, and clever, and Gustave Courtois—"*Le beau Gustave*"—tall and swaggering, with a forked red beard, and a furious moustache like two emphatic accents (both grave and acute), were our professors. They were both first-rate men, and were respected as much as they were feared. They went their rounds with —as it were—scythe blades on their chariot wheels, and flaming swords in their hands. It was nerve-shaking to hear the cheerful and incessant noises of "*les hommes en bas*" cease in an instant, as though they had all been turned to stone, and to know that the Terror that walked in the noonday was upon them. Extraordinary how that silence, and that awful time of waiting for the step on our stair, opened the eyes; everything was wrong, and it was now too late to make it right. And then, the professor's tour of slaughter over, and the study, that was "*pas assez bien construit,*" looking with its savage corrections, as if someone had been striking matches on it, how feebly one tottered to the old concierge for the three sous' worth of black coffee that was to pull one together, and enable the same office to be performed for the humiliated drawing. It may, however, be remembered to "*le beau Gustave*" that one *élève* was spared from the fire and sword to which he was wont to put the Studio. This was a small and ancient widow who arrived one Monday morning, announcing that she was eighty-two, but none the less had decided to become an artist. It was soon pathetically obvious that she would require a further eighty-two years, at least, to carry out her intention. Courtois came,

regarded with stupefaction the sheet of brown paper on which she had described, in pink chalk, hieroglyphs whose purport were known only to herself, faltered "*Continuez, Madame,*" and hurried on. Despite this encouragement, the old lady apparently abandoned her high resolve, for on Saturday she departed, and the Studio knew her no more.

When I think of Colarossi's, I can now recall only foreigners; many Germans, a Czech, who sang, beautifully, enchanting Volksliede of the Balkans, and whose accompaniments I used to play on a piano that properly required two performers, one to sit on the music stool and put the notes down, the other to sit on the floor and push them up again; they all stuck. There were Swiss, and Russians, and *Finlandaises;* there was a Hungarian Jewess, a disgusting being, almost brutish in her manners and customs, yet brilliant in her work; an oily little Marseillaise, Parthians and Medes and Elamites, dwellers in Mesopotamia (with a stress upon the first syllable), unclean, uncivilised, determined, with but one object in life, to extract the last sou of value from their *abonnements* (and, incidentally, also to extract from any unguarded receptacle such colours, charcoal, *punaises*, etc., as they were in need of, uninfluenced by any consideration save that of detection.)

The standard of accomplishment was very high. The Marseillaise, who looked like a rag-picker, did extraordinarily good work; so, as I have said, did the Jewess, whose appearance suggested an itinerant barrow and fried potatoes. (Delicious French fried potatoes! I used to buy five sous' worth off a brazier at the corner of the Place S. Sulpice, and carry them back to the *ménage* wrapped in a piece of *La Patrie*, until Ponce, who adored animals, was told very officiously that they were fried in the fat of

lost dogs, and forbade further dealings with the murderer.)

Colarossi's never took "a day off." Weekdays, Sundays, and holy days, the studios were open, and there were *élèves* at work. Impossible to imagine what has become of them, all those strange, half-sophisticated savages, diligently polishing their single weapon, to which all else had been sacrificed.

Yet when I look back to the Studio, to its profound engrossment in its intention, its single-hearted sacrifice of everything in life to the one Vision, its gorgeous contempt for appearances and conventions, I find myself thinking how good it would be to be five and twenty, and storming up that rickety staircase again, with a paint-box in one hand, and a *Carton* as big as the Gates of Gaza in the other.

DANS LA RIVE GAUCHE.

CHAPTER X

WHEN FIRST SHE CAME

"SURE ye're always laughing! That ye may laugh in the sight of the Glory of Heaven!"

This benediction was bestowed upon Martin by a beggar-woman in Skibbereen, and I hope, and believe, it has been fulfilled. Wherever she was, if a thing amused her she had to laugh. I can see her in such a case, the unpredictable thing that was to touch the spot, said or done, with streaming tears, helpless, almost agonised, much as one has seen a child writhe in the tortured ecstasy of being tickled. The large conventional jest had but small power over her; it was the trivial, subtle absurdity, the inversion of the expected, the sublimity getting a little above itself and failing to realise that it had taken that fatal step over the border; these were the things that felled her, and laid her, wherever she might be, in ruins.

In Richmond Parish Church, on a summer Sunday, it happened to her and a friend to be obliged to stand in the aisle, awaiting the patronage of the pew-opener. The aisle was thronged, and Martin was tired. She essayed to lean against the end of a fully occupied pew, and not only fully occupied, but occupied by a row of such devout and splendid ladies as are only seen in perfection in smart suburban churches. I

have said the aisle was thronged, and, as she leaned, the pressure increased. Too late she knew that she had miscalculated her mark. Like Sisera, the son of Jabin, she bowed (only she bowed backwards), she fell; where she fell, there she lay down, and where she lay down was along the laps of those devout and splendid ladies. These gazed down into her convulsed countenance with eyes that could not have expressed greater horror or surprise if she had been a boa constrictor; a smileless glare, terribly enhanced by gold-rimmed *pince-nez*. She thinks she must have extended over fully four of them. She never knew how she regained the aisle. She was herself quite powerless, and she thinks that with knee action, similar to that of a knife-grinder, they must have banged her on to her feet. It was enough for her to be beyond the power of those horrified and indignant and gold eye-glassed eyes, even though she knew that nothing could deliver her from the grip of the demon of laughter. She says she was given a seat, out of pity, I suppose, shortly afterwards, and there, on her knees and hidden under the brim of her hat, she wept, and uttered those faint insect squeaks that indicate the extremity of endurance, until the end of the service, when her unfortunate companion led her home.

It was, as it happens, in church that I saw her first; in our own church, in Castle Townshend. That was on Sunday, January 17, 1886. I immediately commandeered her to sing in the choir, and from that day, little as she then knew it, she was fated to become one of its fundamental props and stays. A position than which few are more arduous and none more thankless.

I suppose some suggestion of what she looked like should here be given. The photograph that forms

the frontispiece of this book was of this period, and it gives as good a suggestion of her as can be hoped for from a photograph. She was of what was then considered "medium height," 5 ft. 5½ in. Since then the standard has gone up, but in 1886 Martin was accustomed to assert that small men considered her "a monstrous fine woman," and big men said she was "a dear little thing." I find myself incapable of appraising her. Many drawings I have made of her, and, that spring of 1886, before I went to Paris, I attempted also a small sketch in oils, with a hope, that was futile, that colour might succeed where black and white had failed. I can only offer an inadequate catalogue.

Eyes: large, soft, and brown, with the charm of expression that is often one of the compensations of short sight. Hair: bright brown and waving, liable to come down out riding, and on one such occasion described by an impressionable old General as "a chestnut wealth," a stigma that she was never able to live down. A colour like a wild rose—a simile that should be revered on account of its long service to mankind, and must be forgiven since none other meets the case—and a figure of the lightest and slightest, on which had been bestowed the great and capricious boon of smartness, which is a thing apart, and does not rely upon merely anatomical considerations.

"By Jove, Miss Martin," said an ancient dressmaker, of the order generically known as "little women," "By Jove, Miss, you have a very genteel back!" And the compliment could not have been better put, though I think, from a literary standpoint, it was excelled by a commendation pronounced by a "little tailor" on a coat of his own construction. "Now, Mr. Sullivan," said his client anxiously, twining her neck,

giraffe-like, in a vain endeavour to view the small of her own back, "*is* the back right?"

"Mrs. Cair'rns," replied Mr. Sullivan with solemnity, "humanity could do no more."

Martin's figure, good anywhere, looked its best in the saddle; she had the effect of having poised there without effort, as a bird poises on a spray; she looked even more of a feather-weight than she was, yet no horse that I have ever known, could, with his most malign capers, discompose the airy security of her seat, still less shake her nerve. Before I knew how extravagantly short-sighted she was, I did not appreciate the pluck that permitted her to accept any sort of a mount, and to face any sort of a fence, blindfold, and that inspired her out hunting to charge what came in her way, with no more knowledge of what was to happen than Marcus Curtius had when he leaped into the gulf.

It is trite, not to say stupid, to expatiate upon that January Sunday when I first met her; yet it has proved the hinge of my life, the place where my fate, and hers, turned over, and new and unforeseen things began to happen to us. They did not happen at once. An idler, more good-for-nothing pack of "blag-yards" than we all were could not easily be found. I, alone, kept up a pretence of occupation; I was making drawings for the *Graphic* in those days, and was in the habit of impounding my young friends as models. My then studio—better known as "the Pur-lieu," because my mother, inveighing against its extreme disorder, had compared it to "the revolting purlieus of some disgusting town"—(I have said she did not spare emphasis)—was a meeting place for the unemployed, I may say the unemployable, even though I could occasionally wring a pose from one of them.

MARTIN ROSS ON CONFIDENCE.

Many and strange were the expedients to which I had to resort in the execution of those drawings for the *Graphic*. For one series that set forth the romantic and cheiromantic adventures of a clergyman, and the lady (Martin) of his choice, the bedroom of a clerical guest had to be burgled, and his Sunday coat and hat abstracted, at imminent risk of discovery. In another, entitled "A Mule Ride in Trinidad," a brother, in the exiguous costume of bathing drawers and a large straw hat, was for two mornings one of the attractions and ornaments of the Purlieu, after which he retired to bed with a heavy cold, calling down curses upon the Purlieu stove (an *objet d'art* of which Mrs. Martin had said that it solved the problem of producing smoke without fire). Of another series dealing with the adventures of a student of the violin in Paris, I find in my diary the moving entry, "Crucified Martin head downwards, as the fiddle girl, practising, with her music on the floor. Compelled H." (another female relative whose name shall be withheld) "to pose as a Paris tram horse, in white stockings, with a chowrie for a tail."

These artistic exertions were varied by schooling the carriage horses across country—in this connection I find mention of a youth imported by a brother, and briefly alluded to by Martin as "a being like a little meek bird with a brogue"; tobogganing in a bath chair down the village hill (Castle Townshend Hill, which has a fall of about fifty feet in two); "giant-striding" on the flypole in January mud; and, by the exercise of Machiavellian diplomacy, securing Sorcerer and Ballyhooly, the carriage horses aforesaid, for an occasional day with a scratch pack of trencher-fed hounds, that visited the country at intervals, and for whom the epithet "scratch" was appropriate in more senses than one.

It is perhaps noteworthy that on my second or third meeting with Martin I suggested to her that we should write a book together and that I should illustrate it. We had each of us already made our *début* in print; she in the grave columns of the *Irish Times*, with an article on the Administration of Relief to the Sufferers from the "Bad Times" of which she makes mention in her memoir of her brother Robert (page 37); I in the *Argosy*, with a short story, founded upon an incident of high improbability, recounted, by the way, by the "little meek bird with a brogue"; and not, I fear, made more credible by my rendering of it, which had all the worst faults of conventionality and sensationalism.

The literary atmosphere that year was full of what were known as "Shilling Shockers." A great hit had been made with a book of this variety, named "Called Back," and two cousins of our mothers', Mr. W. Wills (the dramatist, already mentioned), and the Hon. Mrs. Greene (whose delightful stories for children, "Cushions and Corners," "The Grey House on the Hill," etc., mark an epoch in such literature), were reported to be collaborating in such a work. But I went to Paris, and Martin put forth on a prolonged round of visits, and our literary ambitions were stowed away with our winter clothes.

In June I returned from Paris; "pale and dwindled," Martin's diary mentions, "but fashionable," which I find gratifying, though quite untrue. It was one of those perfect summers that come sometimes to the south of Ireland, when rain is not, and the sun is hot, but never too hot, and the gardens are a storm of flowers, flowers such as one does not see elsewhere, children of the south and the sun and the sea; tall delphiniums that have climbed to the sky and brought down its most heavenly blue;

Japanese iris, with their pale and dappled lilac discs spread forth to the sun, like little plates and saucers at a high and honourable "tea ceremony" in the land of Nippon; peonies and poppies, arums and asphodel, every one of them three times as tall, and three times as brilliant, and three times as sweet as any of their English cousins, and all of them, and everything else as well, irradiated for me that happy year by a new "Spirit of Delight." It was, as I have said, though then we knew it only dimly, the beginning, for us, of a new era. For most boys and girls the varying, yet invariable, flirtations, and emotional episodes of youth, are resolved and composed by marriage. To Martin and to me was opened another way, and the flowering of both our lives was when we met each other.

If ever Ireland should become organised and systematised, and allotmented, I would put in a plea that the parish of Castle Haven may be kept as a national reserve for idlers and artists and idealists. The memory comes back to me of those blue mornings of mid-June that Martin and I, with perhaps the saving pretence of a paint-box, used to spend, lying on the warm, short grass of the sheep fields on Drishane Side, high over the harbour, listening to the curving cry of the curlews and the mewing of the sea-gulls, as they drifted in the blue over our heads; watching the sunlight waking dancing stars to life in the deeper blue firmament below, and criticising condescendingly the manœuvres of the little white-sailed racing yachts, as they strove and squeezed round their mark-buoys, or rushed emulously to the horizon and back again. Below us, by a hundred feet or so, other idlers bathed in the Dutchman's Cove, uttering those sea-bird screams that seem to be induced by the sea equally in girls as in gulls.

But Martin and I, having taken high ground as artists and idealists, remained, roasting gloriously in the sun, at the top of the cliffs.

That summer was for all of us a time of extreme and excessive lawn tennis. Tournaments, formal and informal, were incessant, challenges and matches raged. Martin and I played an unforgettable match against two long-legged lads, whose handicap, consisting as it did in tight skirts, and highly-trimmed mushroom hats, pressed nearly as heavily on us as on them. My mother, and a female friend of like passions with herself, had backed us to win, and they kept up a wonderful and shameless *barrage* of abuse between the petticoated warriors and their game, and an equally staunch supporting fire of encouragement to us. When at last Martin and I triumphed, my mother and the female friend were voiceless from long screaming, but they rushed speechlessly into the middle of the court and there flung themselves into each other's arms.

It was one of those times of high tide that come now and then, and not in the Golden World did the time fleet more carelessly than it did for all of us that summer. The mornings for sheer idling, the afternoons for lawn tennis, the evenings for dancing, to my mother's unrivalled playing; or there was a coming concert, or a function in the church, to be practised for. A new and zealous clergyman had recently taken the place of a very easy-going cousin of my mother's, and I find in Martin's diary this entry:

"Unparalleled insolence of the new Parson, who wanted to know, *on Saturday*, if Edith had yet chosen the hymns!" and again—"E. by superhuman exertions, got the hymns away" (*i.e.* sent up to the reading desk) "before the 3rd Collect. Canon —— swore himself in."

Kind and excellent man! Had the organist been

the subject sworn about, no one could have blamed him. It was his hat and coat that we stole. His wondrous gentleness and long suffering with a rapscallion choir shall not be forgotten by a no less rapscallion organist.

When I try to recall that lovely summer and its successor, the year of the old Queen's First Jubilee, 1887, I seem best to remember those magical evenings when two or three boat-loads of us would row "up the river," which is no river, but a narrow and winding sea-creek, of, as we hold, unparalleled beauty, between high hills, with trees on both its sides, drooping low over the water, and seaweed, instead of ivy, hanging from their branches. Nothing more enchanting than resting on one's oars in the heart of that dark mirror, with no sound but the sleepy chuckle of the herons in the tall trees on the hill-side, or the gurgle of the tide against the bows, until someone, perhaps, would start one of the glees that were being practised for the then concert—there was always one in the offing—and the Echo, that dwells opposite Roger's Island, would wake from its sleep and join in, not more than half a minute behind the beat.

Or out at the mouth of the harbour, the boats rocking a little in the wide golden fields of moonlight, golden as sunlight, almost, in those August nights, and the lazy oars, paddling in what seemed a sea of opal oil, would drip with the pale flames of the phosphorus that seethed and whispered at their touch, when, as Martin has said,

"Land and sea lay in rapt accord, and the breast of the brimming tide was laid to the breast of the cliff, with a low and broken voice of joy."

These are some of those Irish yesterdays, that came and went lightly, and were more memorable than Martin and I knew, that summer, when first she came.

CHAPTER XI

"AN IRISH COUSIN"

I THINK that the final impulse towards the career of letters was given to us by that sorceress of whom mention has already been made. By her we were assured of much that we did, and even more that we did not aspire to (which included two husbands for me, and at least one for Martin); but in the former category was included "literary success," and, with that we took heart and went forward.

It was in October, 1887, that we began what was soon to be known to us as "The Shocker," and "The Shaughraun," to our family generally, as "that nonsense of the girls," and subsequently, to the general public, as "An Irish Cousin." Seldom have the young and ardent "commenced author" under less conducive circumstances. We were resented on so many grounds. Waste of time; the arrogance of having conceived such a project; and, chiefly, the abstention of two playmates. They called us "The Shockers," "The Geniuses" (this in bitter irony), "The Hugger-muggerers" (this flight of fancy was my mother's); when not actually reviled, we were treated with much the same disapproving sufferance that is shown to an outside dog who sneaks into the house on a wet day. We compared ourselves, not without reason, to the Waldenses and the Albigenses,

and hid and fled about the house, with the knowledge that every man's hand was against us.

Begun in idleness and without conviction, persecution had its usual effect, and deepened somewhat tepid effort into enthusiasm, but the first genuine literary impulse was given by a visit to an old and lonely house, that stands on the edge of the sea, some twelve or thirteen miles from Drishane. It was at that time inhabited by a distant kinswoman of mine, a pathetic little old spinster lady, with the most charming, refined, and delicate looks, and a pretty voice, made interesting by the old-fashioned Irish touch in it; provincial, in that it told of life in a province, yet entirely compatible with gentle breeding. She called me "Eddith," I remember (a pronunciation entirely her own), and she addressed the remarkable being who ushered us in, half butler, half coachman, as "Dinnis," and she asked us to "take a glass of wine" with her, and, apologising for the all too brief glimpse of the fire vouchsafed to the leg of mutton, said she trusted we did not mind the meat being "rare."

The little lady who entertained us is dead now; the old house, stripped of its ancient portraits and furniture, is, like many another, in the hands of farmer-people; its gardens have reverted to jungle. I wonder if the tombstone of the little pet dog has been respected. In the shade of a row of immense junipers, that made a sheltering hedge between the flower garden and the wide Atlantic, stood the stone, inscribed, with the romantic preciosity of our hostess's youth,

"Lily, a violet-shrouded tomb of woe."

But it was the old house, dying even then, that touched our imaginations; full of memories of brave days past, when the little lady's great-grandfather,

"Splendid Ned," had been a leading blade in "The County of Corke Militia Dragoons," and his son, her grandfather, had raised a troop of yeomanry to fight the Whiteboys, and, when the English Government disbanded the yeomen, had, in just fury, pitched their arms over the cliff into the sea, rather than yield them to the rebels, and had then drunk the King's health, with showy loyalty, in claret that had never paid the same King a farthing.

We had ridden the long thirteen miles in gorgeous October sunshine; before we had seen the gardens, and the old castle on the cliff, and the views generally, the sun was low in the sky, but we were not allowed to leave until a tea, as colossal as our lunch had been, was consumed. Our protests were unheeded, and we were assured that we should be "no time at all springing through the country home." (A suggestion that moved Martin so disastrously, that only by means of hasty and forced facetiousness was I enabled to justify her reception of it.) The sunset was red in the west when our horses were brought round to the door, and it was at that precise moment that into the Irish Cousin some thrill of genuineness was breathed. In the darkened façade of the long grey house, a window, just over the hall-door, caught our attention. In it, for an instant, was a white face. Trails of ivy hung over the panes, but we saw the face glimmer there for a minute and vanish.

As we rode home along the side of the hills, and watched the fires of the sunset sink into the sea, and met the crescent moon coming with faint light to lead us home, we could talk and think only of that presence at the window. We had been warned of certain subjects not to be approached, and knew enough of the history of that old house to realise what we had seen. An old stock, isolated from the

world at large, wearing itself out in those excesses that are a protest of human nature against unnatural conditions, dies at last with its victims round its death-bed. Half-acknowledged, half-witted, wholly horrifying; living ghosts, haunting the house that gave them but half their share of life, yet withheld from them, with half-hearted guardianship, the boon of death.

The shock of it was what we had needed, and with it "the Shocker" started into life, or, if that is too much to say for it, its authors, at least, felt that conviction had come to them; the insincere ambition of the "Penny Dreadful" faded, realities asserted themselves, and the faked "thrills" that were to make our fortunes were repudiated for ever. Little as we may have achieved it, an ideal of Art rose then for us, far and faint as the half-moon, and often, like her, hidden in clouds, yet never quite lost or forgotten.

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Probably all those who have driven the pen, in either single or double harness, are familiar with the questions wont to be propounded by those interested, or anxious to appear interested, in the craft of letters. It is strange how beaten a track curiosity uses. The inquiries vary but little. One type of investigator regards the *métier* of book-maker as a kind of cross between the trades of cook and conjurer. If the recipe of the mixture, or the trick of its production, can be extracted from those possessed of the secret, the desired result can be achieved as simply as a rice pudding, and forced like a card upon the publishers. The alternative inquirer approaches the problem from the opposite pole, and poses respectfully that conundrum with which the Youth felled Father William:

"What makes you so awfully clever?" "How

do you think of the things?" And again, "How can you make the words come one after the other?" And yet another, more wounding, though put in all good feeling, "But how do you manage about the spelling? I suppose the printers do that for you?"

With Martin and me, however, the fact of our collaboration admitted of variants. I have found a fragment of a letter of mine to her that sets forth some of these. As it also in some degree expounds the type of the examiner, I transcribe it all.

E. Œ. S. to V. F. M. (*circa* 1904).

"She was wearing white kid gloves, and was eating heavily buttered teacake and drinking tea, with her gloves buttoned, and her veil down, and her loins, generally, girded, as if she were keeping the Passover. She began by discussing Archdeacon Z——'s wife.

"'Ah, she was a sweet woman, but she always had a very delicate, puny sort of a colour. Ah no, *not* strong.' A sigh, made difficult, but very moving, by teacake, followed by hurried absorption of tea. 'And the poor Archdeacon too. Ah, he was a very clever man.' (My countenance probably expressed dissent.) 'Well, he was very clever at *religion*. Oh, he was a wonderfully holy man! Now, *that's* what I'd call him, holy. And he used to talk like that. Nothing but religion; he certainly was most clever at it.'

"Later on in the conversation, which lasted, most enjoyably, for half an hour, 'Are *you* the Miss Somerville who writes the books with Miss Martin? Now! To think I should have been talking to you all this time! And is it you that do the story and Miss Martin the words?' (etc., etc., for some time). 'And which of you holds the pen?' (To this branch of the

examination much weight was attached, and it continued for some time.) 'And do you put in everyone you meet? No? Only sometimes? And sometimes people who you *never* met? Well! I declare, that's like direct inspiration!'

"She was a delightful woman. She went on to ask me,

"'Do you travel much? I love it! I think Abroad's very pritty. Do you like Abroad?'

"She also told me that she and 'me daughter' had just been to Dublin—'to see the great tree y'know.' By the aid of 'direct inspiration' I guessed that she meant Beerbohm of that ilk, but as she hadn't mentioned the theatre, I think it was rather a fine effort."

The question put by this lady, as to which of us held the pen, has ever been considered of the greatest moment, and, as a matter of fact, during our many years of collaboration, it was a point that never entered our minds to consider. To those who may be interested in an unimportant detail, I may say that our work was done conversationally. One or the other—not infrequently both, simultaneously—would state a proposition. This would be argued, combated perhaps, approved, or modified; it would then be written down by the (wholly fortuitous) holder of the pen, would be scratched out, scribbled in again; before it found itself finally transferred into decorous MS. would probably have suffered many things, but it would, at all events, have had the advantage of having been well aired.

I have an interesting letter, written by a very clever woman, herself a writer, to a cousin of ours. She found it impossible to believe in the jointness of the authorship, though she admitted her inability

to discern the joints in the writing, and having given "An Irish Cousin" a handling far more generous than it deserves, says:

"But though I think the book a success, and cannot pick out the fastenings of the two hands, I yet think the next novel ought to be by *one* of them. I wonder by which! I say this because I thought the conception and carrying out of 'Willy' much the best part of the character drawing of the whole book. It had the real thing in it. If Willy, and the poor people's talk, were by one hand, that hand is the better of the two, say I!"

I sent this letter to Martin, and had "the two hands" collaborated in her reply, it could not more sufficingly have expressed my feelings.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Sept., 1889.)

"You do not say if you want Miss ——'s most interesting letter back. Never mind what she says about people writing together. We have proved that we can do it, and we shall go on. The reason few people can, is because they have separate minds upon most subjects, and fight their own hands all the time. I think the two Shockers have a very strange belief in each other, joined to a critical faculty; added to which, writing together is, to me at least, one of the greatest pleasures I have. To write with you doubles the triumph and the enjoyment, having first halved the trouble and anxiety."

On January 3rd, 1888, we had finished the first half of "An Irish Cousin."

I find in my diary: "A few last revisionary scratches at the poor Shocker, and so farewell for the present. Gave it to mother to read. She loathes it."

All through the spring months we wrote and rewrote,

and clean-copied, and cast away the clean copies illegible from corrections. Intermittently, and as we could, we wrote on, and in Martin's diary I find a quotation from an old part-song that expressed the general attitude towards us :

> "Thus flies the dolphin from the shark,
> And the stag before the hounds."

Martin and I were the dolphin and the stag. As a propitiatory measure the Shocker was read aloud at intervals, but with no great success. Our families declined to take us seriously, but none the less offered criticisms, incessant, and mutually destructive. In connection with this point, and as a warning to other beginners, I will offer a few quotations from letters of this period.

E. Œ. S. to V. F. M. (Spring, 1888.)

"Minnie says you are too refined, and too anxious not to have anything in our book that was ever in anyone else's book. Mother, on the other hand, complained bitterly of the want of love interest. Minnie defended us, and told her that there was now plenty of love in it. To which Mother, who had not then read the proposal, replied with infinite scorn, 'only squeezing her hand, my dear!' She went on to say that she '*liked* improprieties.' I assured her I had urged you in vain to permit such, and she declared that you were quite wrong, and when I suggested the comments of The Family, she loudly deplored the fact of our writing being known, ignoring the fact that she has herself blazoned it to the ends of the earth *and* to Aunt X."

Following on this, a protest is recorded from another relative, on the use of the expression "he ran as if

the devil were after him," but the letter ends with a reassuring postscript.

" Mother has just said that she thought Chapter IX *excellent*, ' most fiery love ' ; though she said it had rather taken her by surprise, as she ' had not noticed a stream of love leading up to it—only jealousy.' "

At length, in London, on May 24th, the end, which had seemed further off than the end of the world, came. The MS., fairly and beautifully copied,—typewriters being then unborn,—was sent off to Messrs. Sampson Low. In a month it returned, without comment. We then, with, as Dr. Johnson says, " a frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure, or from praise," placed it in the hands of a friend to do with it as he saw fit, and proceeded to forget all about it.

It was not until the following December that the dormant Shocker suddenly woke to life. It was on Sunday morning, December 2nd, 1888, that the fateful letter came. Messrs. R. Bentley & Son offered us £25 on publication, and £25 on sale of 500 copies of the book, which was to be published in two volumes at half a guinea each.

" All comment is inadequate," says Martin's diary ; " wrote a dizzy letter of acceptance to Bentley, and went to church, twice, in a glorified trance."

(Thus did a huntsman of mine, having slain two foxes in a morning, which is a rarer feat in Carbery than—say—in Cheshire, present himself in gratitude at the priest's night-school.)

Passing over intermediate matters, I will follow the career of the Shocker, which was not published for six months after its assignment to Messrs. Bentley, six months during which Martin had written several admirable articles for *The World* (then edited by Mr. Edmund Yates), and I had illustrated a picture-

book, " The Kerry Recruit," and written an indifferent short story, and we had begun to think about " The Real Charlotte." For some reason that I have now forgotten, my mother was opposed to my own name appearing in " An Irish Cousin." Martin's *nom de plume* was ready to hand, her articles in *The World* having been signed " Martin Ross," but it was only after much debate and searching of pedigrees that a Somerville ancestress, by name Geilles Herring, was selected to face the music for me. Her literary career was brief, and was given a death-blow by Edmund Yates, who asked " Martin Ross " the reason of her collaboration with a grilled herring; and as well as I remember, my own name was permitted to appear in the second edition.

This followed the first with a pleasing celerity, and was sold out by the close of the year. Any who have themselves been through the mill, and know what it is to bring forth a book, will remember the joys, and fears, and indignations, and triumphings, that accompany the appearance of a first-born effort. Many and various were the letters and criticisms. Our vast relationship made an advertising agency of the most far-reaching and pervasive nature, and our friends were faithful in their insistence in the matter at the libraries.

" *Have* you ' An Irish Cousin ? ' " was demanded at a Portsmouth bookshop.

" No, Madam," the bookseller replied, with *hauteur*, " I have *no* H'Irish relations."

Looking back on it now, I recognise that what was in itself but a very moderate and poorly constructed book owed its success, not only with the public, but with the reviewers, to the fact that it chanced to be the first in its particular field. Miss Edgeworth had been the last to write of Irish country life with

sincerity and originality, dealing with both the upper and lower classes, and dealing with both unconventionally. Lever's brilliant and extravagant books, with their ever enchanting Micky Frees and Corney Delaneys, merely created and throned the stage Irishman, the apotheosis of the English ideal. It was of Lever's period to be extravagant. The Handley Cross series is a case in point. Let me humbly and hurriedly disclaim any impious thought of depreciating Surtees. No one who has ever ridden a hunt, or loved a hound, but must admit that he has his unsurpassable moments. "The Cat and Custard-pot day," with that run that goes with the rush of a storm; the *tête-à-tête* of Mr. Jorrocks and James Pigg, during which they drank each other's healths, and the healths of the hounds, and the *séance* culminated with the immortal definition of the state of the weather, as it obtained in the cupboard; Soapey Sponge and Lucy Glitters "sailing away with the again breast-high-scent pack"—these things are indeed *hors concours*. But I think it is undeniable that the hunting people of Handley Cross, like Lever's dragoons, were always at full gallop. With Surtees as with Lever, everyone is "all out," there is nothing in hand—save perhaps a pair of duelling pistols or a tandem whip—and the height of the spirits is only equalled by the tallness of the hero's talk. That intolerable adjective "rollicking" is consecrated to Lever; if certain of the rank and file of the reviewers of our later books could have realised with what abhorrence we found it applied to ourselves, and could have known how rigorously we had endeavoured to purge our work of anything that might justify it, they might, out of the kindness that they have always shown us, have been more sparing of it.

Lever was a Dublin man, who lived most of his

EDITH ŒNONE SOMERVILLE.

life on the Continent, and worked, like a scene-painter, by artificial light, from memoranda. Miss Edgeworth had the privilege, which was also ours, of living in Ireland, in the country, and among the people of whom she wrote. Of the Irish novels of Miss Lawless the same may be said, though the angle at which she chose to regard that many-sided and deeply agreeable person, the Irish peasant, excluded the humour that permeates Miss Edgeworth's books. (One recalls with gratitude the "quality toss" of Miss Judy McQuirk.) That Miss Edgeworth's father was a landlord, and a resident one, deepened her insight and widened her opportunities. Panoramic views may, no doubt, be obtained from London; and what a County Meath lady spoke of as a "*ventre à terre* in Dublin" has its advantages; but I am glad that my lot and Martin's were cast "in a fair ground, in a good ground, In Carbery"—(with apologies to Mr. Kipling)—"by the sea."

* * * * *

I will not inflict the undeservedly kind comments of the reviewers of "An Irish Cousin" upon these pages, though I may admit that nothing that I have ever read, before or since, has seemed to me as entirely delightful as the column and a half that *The Spectator* generously devoted to a very humble book, by two unknowns, who had themselves nearly lost belief in it.

August, 1889, was a lucky month for Martin and me. We had a "good Press"—we have often marvelled at its goodness—we were justified of our year of despised effort; the hunted Shockers emerged from their caves to take a place in the sun; we had indeed "Commenced Author."

CHAPTER XII

THE YEARS OF THE LOCUST

Before I abandon these "Irish Cousin" years at Drishane, I should like to say something more of the old conditions there. I do not think I claim too much for my father and mother when I say that they represented for the poor people of the parish their Earthly Providence, their Court of Universal Appeal, and, in my mother's case, their Medical Attendant, who, moreover, provided the remedies, as well as the nourishment, that she prescribed.

The years of the 'eighties were years of leanness, "years that the locust hath eaten." Congested District Boards and Departments of Agriculture had not then arisen. Successive alterations of the existing land tenure had bewildered rather than encouraged the primitive farmers of this southern seaboard; the benefits promised were slow in materialising, and in the meantime the crops failed. The lowering or remission of rents did not mean any immediate benefit to people who were often many years in arrears. Even in normal years the yield of the land, in the district of which I speak, barely sufficed to feed the dwellers on it; the rent, when paid, was, in most cases, sent from America, by emigrated sons and daughters. There was but little margin at any time. In bad years there was hunger.

Two or three fairly prosperous farms there were, and for the rest, a crowd of entirely "uneconomic" holdings, a rabble of fragmentary patches, scarcely larger than the "allotments" of this present war time, each producing a plentiful crop of children, but leaving much to be desired in such matters as the increase of the soil.

The district is not a large one. It contains about eight miles of fierce and implacable seaboard, with only a couple of coves in which the fishermen can find some shelter for their boats, and its whole extent is but three or four miles in length, by a little more than half as many in depth. A great headland, like a lion couchant, sentinels it on one side; on the other, a long and malign spike of rock, thinly clad with heather, and furze, drives out into the Atlantic, like an alligator with jaws turned seawards. Not few are the ships that have found their fate in those jaws; during these past three years of war, this stretch of sea has seen sudden and fearful happenings, but even these tragedies are scarcely more fearful than those that, in the blackness of mid-winter storms, have befallen many a ship on the desperate rocks of Yokawn and Reendhacusán.

It is hard to blame people for being ignorant, equally hard to condemn them for thriftlessness and dirt in such conditions as obtained thirty years ago in what are now called "Congested Districts." Thriftlessness and dirt were indeed the ruling powers in that desolate country. In fortunate years, desolate and "congested" though it was, its little fields, inset among the rocks and bogs, could produce crops in reasonable quantity, and—as I do not wish to overstate the case—not less luxuriant in growth than their attendant weeds. The yellow ragwort, the purple loosestrife, the gorgeous red and orange heads of the

docks, only in Kerry can these *fleurs de mal* be equalled, even in Kerry they cannot be surpassed. The huge shoulder of the headland is beautiful with heather and ling of all sorts and shades ; the pink sea-thrift—would that other forms of thrift throve with equal success !—meets the heather at the verge of the cliffs, and looks like a decoration of posies of monthly roses. *Osmunda Regalis* fern fringes the streams, and the fuchsia bushes have fed on the Food of the Gods and are become trees. On a central plateau, high over the sea, stands one of the signal towers that were built at the time of the French landing in Bantry. In its little courtyard you stand " ringed by the azure world." From west to east the ocean is wide before you. On many days I have seen it, in summer and winter alike lovely ; a vast outlook that snatches away your breath, and takes you to its bosom, making you feel yourself the very apex and central point of the wondrous crescent line of fretted shore, that swings from the far blue Fastnet Rock, looking like an anchored battleship, on the west, to the long and slender arm of the Galley Head, with its white light-house, floating like a seagull on the rim of the horizon. Between those points, among those heavenly blues and greens and purples, that change and glow and melt into each other in ecstasies of passionate colour, history has been made, and unforgettable things have happened. But standing up there in the wind and the sun, on that small green circle of grass, hearing the sea-birds' wild and restless cries, watching the waves lift and break into snow on the flanks of the Stag Rocks far below, it is impossible to remember human insanity, impossible to think of anything save of the overwhelming beauty that encircles you.

In that climate and that soil anything could flourish, given only a little shelter, and a little care, and the

elimination from the cultivators of traditional imbecilities; eliminating also, if possible, fatalism, and the custom of attributing to "the Will o' God" each and every disaster, from a houseful of hungry children to an outbreak of typhus consequent on hopelessly insanitary conditions.

"How was it the spuds failed with ye?" asked someone, looking at the blackened "lazy-beds" of potatoes.

"I couldn't hardly say," replied the cultivator, who had omitted the attention of spraying them; "Whatever it was, God spurned them in a boggy place."

Things are better now. The Congested Districts Board has done much, the general spread of education and civilisation has done more. Inspectors, instructors, remission of rents, land purchase, State loans, English money in various forms, have improved the conditions in a way that would hardly have been credible thirty years ago, when, in these congested districts, semi-famine was chronic, and few, besides the "little scholars" of the National Schools, could read or write, and the breeding of animals and cultivation of crops was the affair of an absentee Providence, and no more to be influenced by human agency than the vagaries of the weather.

The first of the "Famines" in which I can remember my mother's collecting and distributing relief was in 1880. The potatoes had failed, and I find it recorded that "troops of poor women came to Drishane from the west for help." My mother lectured them on the necessity of not eating the potatoes that had been given them for seed, and assured them, not as superfluously as might be supposed, that if they ate them they could not sow them. To this they replied in chorus.

"May the Lord spare your Honour long!" and went home and boiled the seed-potatoes for supper.

Poor creatures, what else could they do, with their children asking them for food?

In that same spring came a woman, crying, and saying she was "the most disthressful poor person, that hadn't the good luck to be in the Misthress's division." Asked where she lived, she replied,

"I do be like a wild goose over on the side of Drominidy Wood."

Spring after spring, during those dark years for Ireland of the 'eighties, the misery and the hunger-time recurred. Seed-potatoes, supplied by charity, were eaten; funds were raised, and help, public and private, was given, but Famine, like its brother, Typhus, was only conciliated, never annihilated. In 1891 Mr. Balfour's Relief Fund and Relief Works brought almost the first touch of permanence into the alleviating conditions. My mother was among the chief of the distributors for this parish. Desperate though the state of many of the people was, Ireland has not yet, thank Heaven, ceased to be Ireland, and the distribution of relief had some irrepressibly entertaining aspects that need not wholly be ignored.

My mother had herself collected a considerable sum of money, for buying food and clothes (the Government fund being, as well as I recollect, mainly devoted to the purchase of seed-potatoes). Many were her clients, and grievous though their need was, it was impossible not to enjoy the high absurdities of her convocations of distribution. These took place in the kitchen at Drishane. The women came twice a week to get the food tickets, and the preliminary gathering in the stable-yard looked and sounded like a parliament of rooks. Incredibly ragged and wretched, but unquenchable in spirit and conversation, they sat,

huddled in dark cloaks or shawls, on the ground in rows, waiting to be admitted to the kitchen when "The Misthress" was ready for them. Most of them had known nothing of the existence of the fund until told of it by my mother's envoys. It was my mission, and that of my brethren, to ride through the distressed town-lands, and summon those who seemed in worst need, and in my letters and diaries of these years I have found many entries on the subject.

"*Jan.* 27, 1891.—Rode round the Lickowen country. Sickened and stunned by the misery. Hordes of women and children in the filthiest rags. Gave as many bread and tea tickets as we could, but felt helpless and despairing in the face of such hopeless poverty."

"*January* 30.—Jack and I again rode to the West to collect Widows for the Relief Fund. Bagged nine and had some lepping" (an ameliorating circumstance of these expeditions was the necessity of making cross-country short cuts). "Numbers of women came over, some being rank frauds ably detected by the kitchenmaid; one or two knee-deep in lies." "The boys walked to Bawneshal with tea, etc., for two of the worst widows." (The adjective refers to their social, not their moral standing.)

On another occasion I have recorded that my sister was sent to inquire into the circumstances of a poor woman with a large family. The latter, in absorbed interest in the proceedings, surrounded the mother, who held in her arms the most recent of the number, an infant three weeks old.

"I have seven children," said the pale mother, "and this little one-een that," she turned a humorous grey eye on her listening family, "I'm afther taking out of the fox's mouth!" (The fox playing the part attributed in Germany to the stork.)

My sister, absorbed in estimating the needs of the seven little brothers and sisters, replied absently, "*Poor* little thing! It must have been very frightened!"

Mrs. Conolly stared, and, in all her misery, began to laugh; "May the Lord love ye, Miss!" she said compassionately yet admiringly, "May ye never grow grey!"

The difficulties of distribution were many, not the least being that of steeling my mother's heart, and keeping her doles in some reasonable relation to her resources. I should like to try to give some idea of one of these gatherings. Lists of those in most immediate need of help had been prepared, I do not now remember by whom, and, in the majority of cases, the names given were those of the males of the respective households. Therefore would my mother, standing tall and majestic in the middle of the big, dark, old kitchen at Drishane, her list in her hand, certain underlings (usually her daughters and the kitchen-maid) in attendance, summon to her presence—let us say—"John Collins, Jeremiah Leary, Patrick Driscoll." (These are names typical of this end of West Carbery, and the subsequent proceedings, like the names, may be accepted in a representative sense.)

The underling, as Gold Stick-in-Waiting, would then advance to the back door, and from the closely attendant throng without would draw, as one draws hounds in kennel, but with far more difficulty, the female equivalents of the gentlemen in question.

"Now, John Collins," says my mother (who declared it confused her if she didn't stick to what was written in the list), addressing a little woman, the rags of whose shrouding black shawl made her look like the Jackdaw of Rheims subsequent to the curse, "Now, John Collins, here's your ticket. Is your daughter better?"

"Why then she is not, your Honour, Ma'am," replies John Collins in a voluble whine, "only worse she is. She didn't ate a bit since." John Collins pauses, removes a hairpin from her back hair, and with nicety indicates on it a quarter of an inch. "God knows she didn't ate *that* much since your Honour seen her; but sure she might fancy some little rarity that yourself 'd send her."

There follow medical details on which I do not propose to dwell. My mother, ever a mighty doctor before the Lord, prescribes, promises "a rarity," in the shape of a rice pudding, and John Collins, well satisfied, swings her shawl, yashmak-wise, across her mouth, and pads away on her bare feet.

"Patrick Driscoll!"

Patrick Driscoll, bony and haggard, the hood of her dark cloak over her red head, demands an extra quantity, on the plea of extra poverty.

She is asked why her husband does not get work.

"Husband is it!" echoes Patrick Driscoll, witheringly, "What have I but a soort of an old man of a husband, that's no use only to stay in his bed!"

Other women press in through the doorway, despite the efforts of the underlings, each eloquent of her superior sufferings. Another husband is inquired for.

"He's dead, Ma'am, the Lord ha' mercy upon him, he's in his coffin this minute; and Fegs, he was in the want of it!"

Yet another has a blind husband.

"Dark as a stone, asthore," she says to Gold Stick, "only for he being healthy and qu'ite, I'd be dead altogether! Well, welcome the Will o' God! I might be worse, as bad as I am!"

Philosophy, resignation, piety, humour, one finds them all in these bewildering, infuriating, enchanting

people. And then, perhaps, a cry from the heart of the crowd,

" Sure ye'll *not* forget yer own darlin' Mary Leary ! "

A heartrending appeal that elicits from the Mistress a peremptory command not to attempt to come out of her turn.

Nothing could be more admirable than my mother's manner with the people. Entirely simple, dictatorial, sympathetic, sensible. She believed herself to be an infallible judge of character, but " for all and for all," as we say in Carbery, her soft heart was often her undoing, and her sterner progeny found her benevolence difficult to control. She was, in fact, as a man said of a spendthrift and drunken brother, " too lion-hearted for her manes " (means).

" No wonder," said one of her supplicants, " Faith, no wonder at all for the Colonel to be proud of her ! She'd delight a Black ! "

Whether this imputed to the Black a specially severe standard of taste, or if it meant that even the most insensate savage would be roused to enthusiasm by my mother's beauty, I am unable to determine.

I have a letter from my companion Gold Stick, from which I think a few quotations, in exemplification, may be permitted.

Hildegarde Somerville to E. Œ. S. (Feb., 1891.)

" The women have swarmed since you left. I really think I know every one of them now, by voice, sight, and smell, notably Widow Catherine Cullinane, who has besieged us daily. Her voice is not dulcet, especially when raised in abusive entreaty, but she has not got anything out of me yet. It is as well that C. (a brother) and I are here to manage the show, as Mother is, to say the least, lavish. I was out one day

when a woman called, a Mrs. Michael Kelleher; she has the most magnificent figure, walk, and throat that I have ever seen. She is tall, and her throat is exactly like the Rossetti women's throats, long and round, and like cream. She would make a splendid model for you. I had seen her before, and proved her not deserving," (O wise young judge of quite nineteen!) "her husband being a caretaker with a house and 4s. a week, and the use of two cows, besides a daughter out as a nursemaid. She really did not exactly beg, but came to see if she had 'a shance of the sharity.' Her eldest boy, aged eleven, had fallen off the cowhouse roof on to a cow's back (neither hurt!), and we gave her Elliman, which cured him. But the day I was out, Mother saw her, and although I had given *full particulars* in the book as to her means"—(her princely affluence in fact, as compared with her fellows)—"she gave her bread, tea, sugar, and meal, simply because she had a baby the other day and had a child with a bad cold."

Regarding the matter dispassionately, and from a distance, I should say that either affliction amply justified my mother's action, but H. did not then think so.

"I don't think this will happen again," she resumes, severely, "as Mother now regrets having done it. All the same, I had the greatest difficulty in stopping her from clothing an entire family with the Dorcas things, (which are lovely) as I told her, there are not 100 things, and there are over 200 people, and it seems wicked to clothe one family from top to toe, so I prevailed. E. says the Balfour Fund will help very few of our women." (E. was my cousin Egerton Coghill, who, like Robert Martin, had given his services to the Government as a distributor of the Fund, and, in the south and west of the County Cork,

had some of the worst districts in Ireland under his jurisdiction.)

"No one with less than a quarter of an acre of land is entitled to get help," my sister's letter continues, "as they can get Out-door Relief from the Rates, and no one with one 'healthy male' able to work on the Balfour road can have it, in fact, only those with sick husbands, or widows with farms, are eligible. As the fund is over £44,000, and I have estimated that £150 would keep our Western women going for 6 months, it seems to me very unfair to send the quarter-acre people on to the Rates."

It may be gathered from this that the difficulties of administration were not light; it may also, perhaps, be inferred that the ancient confidence in the landlord class (none of these people were tenants of my father's), which modern teaching has done its best to obliterate, was not entirely misplaced. I do not claim any exceptional virtues for my father and mother. Their efforts on behalf of their distressed neighbours were no more than typical of what their class was, and is, accustomed to consider the point of honour. It remains to be seen if the substitutes for the old order will adopt and continue the tradition of "*Noblesse oblige.*"

I have heard a beggar-woman haranguing on this topic.

"I towld them," she cried, with, I admit, an eye on my hand as it sought my pocket, "you were the owld stock, and had the glance of the Somervilles in your eye! God be with the owld times! The Somervilles and the Townshends! Them was the rale genthry! Not this shipwrecked crew that's in it now!"

I may as well acknowledge at once that Martin

A CASTLEHAVEN WOMAN.

and I have ever adored and encouraged beggars, however venal, and have seldom lost an opportunity of enjoying their conversation ; ancient female beggars especially, although I have met many very attractive old men. At my mother's Famine Conversaziones many beggar-women, whose names were on no list, would join themselves to the company of the accredited.

" I have no certain place Achudth ! " (a term of endearment), said one such to me, " I'm between God and the people."

It may be said that the people, however deep their own want, are unfailing in charity to such as she. I had, for a long time, a creature on my visiting list, or, to be accurate, I was on hers, who was known as " the Womaneen." As far as I know, she subsisted entirely on " the Neighbours," wandering round the country from house to house, never refused a night's lodging and the " wetting of her mouth o' tay " ; generally given " a share o' praties " to " put in her bag for herself." She was the very best of company, and the bestowal of that super-coveted boon, an old pair of boots, had power to evoke a gratitude that shamed its recipient.

" Yes, Hanora," I have said, " I believe I have a pair to give you."

On this the " Womaneen " opened the service of thanksgiving by clasping her hands, mutely raising her eyes to Heaven, and opening and shutting her mouth ; this to show that emotion had rendered her speechless. She next seized my reluctant hand, and smacked upon it kisses of a breadth and quality that suggested the enveloping smack of a pancake when it has been tossed high and returns to its pan. Her speech was then recovered.

" That Good Luck may attind you every day you

see the sun! That I mightn't leave this world until I see you well marrid!" A pause, and a luscious look that spoke unutterable things. "Ah ha! I'll tell the Miss Connors that ye thrated me dacint!" A laugh, triumphing in my superiority to the Misses Connor, followed, and I made haste to produce the boots.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! Me heart 'd open! Ye-me-lay, but they'll go on me in style!"

Then, in a darkling whisper, and with a conspirator's eye on the open hall-door: "Where did you get them, asthore? Was it Mamma gave 'em t'ye?" (The implication being that I, for love of the "Womaneen," must have stolen them, as no one could have parted with them voluntarily.) Then returning to the larger style. "That God Almighty may retch out the two hands to ye, my Pearl of a noble lady! How will I return thanks to ye? That the great God may lave me alive until I'd be crawlin' this-a-way"—(an inch by inch progress is pantomimed with two gnarled and ebony fingers)—"and on my knees, till I'd see the gran' weddin' of my fine lady that gave me the paireen o' shluppers!"

I think it will be admitted that this was an adequate return for value received.

CHAPTER XIII

THE RESTORATION

It was in June, 1888, that Mrs. Martin became the tenant of Ross House and that she and her daughters returned to Galway, sixteen years, to the very month, since they had left it.

It would demand one more skilled than I in the unfathomable depths of Irish Land Legislation to attempt to set forth the precise status of Ross, its house, demesne, and estate, at this time. It is not, after all, a matter of any moment, save to those concerned. Mrs. Martin had been staying in Galway, and had paid a visit to Ross, with the result that she decided to rent the house and gardens from the authorities in whose jurisdiction they then were, and set herself to "build the walls of Jerusalem." The point which may be dwelt on is the courage that was required to return to a place so fraught with memories of a happiness never to be recaptured, and to take up life again among people in whom, as was only too probable, the ancient friendship was undermined by years of absence, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding. The handling of the estate had been unfortunate; the house and demesne had been either empty, or in the hands of strangers, careless and neglectful of all things, save only of the woodcock shooting, and the rabbit-trapping. When Mrs. Martin

proposed to become a tenant in her old home, it had been empty for some time, and had suffered the usual indignities at the hands of what are erroneously known as caretakers. It is possible that caretakers exist who take care, and take nothing else, but the converse is more usual, and I do not imagine that Ross was any exception to the average of such cases.

The motives that impelled my cousin Nannie to face the enormous difficulties involved can, however, be understood, and that Martin should have sacrificed herself to the Lares and Penates of Ross—Ross, the love of which was rooted in her from her cradle—was no more, I suppose, than was to be expected from her.

From her mother had come the initiative, but it was Martin who saved Ross. She hurled herself into the work of restoration with her own peculiar blend of enthusiasm and industry, qualities that, in my experience, are rarely united. Her letters became instantly full of house-paintings, house-cleanings, mendings, repairs of every kind; what was in any degree possible she did with her own hands, what was not, she supervised, inventing, instructing, insisting on the work being done right, in the teeth of the invincible determination of the workmen to adhere to the tradition of the elders, and do it wrong.

Looking back on it, it seems something of a waste to have set a razor to cut down trees, and the work that was accomplished by "Martin Ross" that year was small indeed as compared with the manifold activities of "Miss Wilet."

There was everything to be done, inside and outside that old house, and no one to do it but one fragile, indomitable girl. Ireland, now, is full of such places as Ross was then. "Gentry-houses," places that were once disseminators of light, of the humanities;

centres of civilisation; places to which the poor people rushed, in any trouble, as to Cities of Refuge. They are now destroyed, become desolate, derelict. To-day

> "The Lion and the Lizard keep
> The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
> And Bahram, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
> Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep."

But even more than the laying waste of Ross House and gardens I believe it was the torture of the thought that the Ross people might feel that the Martins had failed them, and that the "Big House" was no longer the City of Refuge for its dependants in the day of trouble, that chiefly spurred Martin on, in her long and gallant fight with every sort of difficulty, that summer, when she and her mother began to face the music again at Ross.

In that music, however, there was an undertone of discord that threatened for a while to wreck all the harmony. There are a few words that Martin had written, in continuation of the account of her brother Robert, that explain the matter a little, and I will quote them here.

"The white chapel that overlooked the lake and the woods of Ross, heard much, at about this time (*i.e.* the later years of the 'eighties), that was not of a spiritual tendency. The Land League had been established in the parish; the branch had for its head, in the then Parish Priest, an Apostle of land agitation, a man whose power of bitter animosity, legal insight, and fighting quality, would have made his name in another profession. He made his mark in his own, a grievous one for himself. He rose up against his Bishop, supported by the great majority of his parish, and received the reprimand of his Church. He went with his case to Rome, and after long intrigue

there, came home, a beaten man, dispossessed of his parish, and was received in Galway with a brass band and a procession, the latter of which accompanied him, brokenly, but with persistence, to his home, a distance of about fifteen miles. For many months afterwards the strange and not unimpressive spectacle presented itself, of a Roman Catholic Priest defying his Church, and holding, by some potent spell, the support of the majority of his parish. Sunday after Sunday two currents of parishioners set in different directions, the one heading to the lawful Chapel on the hill and the accredited priest, the other to the green and white 'Land League Hut,' that had been built with money that Father Z. had himself collected."

Martin's MS. ceases here. I may add to it a little.

I went to Ross not long after Father Z.'s return from Rome. I chanced but once to see him, but the remembrance of that fierce and pallid face, and of the hatred in it, is with me still. He is dead, and I believe that his teaching died with him. The evil that men do does not always live after them. The choice of his successor was a fortunate one for the parish of Rosscahill. Few people out of Ireland realise how much depends on the personality of the parish priest. Father Z. had had it in his power to shake a friendship of centuries, but it was deeply rooted, he could do no more than shake it. His successor had other views of his duty; in him the people of Rosscahill and the House of Ross, alike, found a friend, unfailing in kindness and sympathy, a priest who made it his mission to bring peace to his parish, and not a sword.

No one was more sensible of this friendship, or more grateful for it than Martin. What sustained her and made the sacrifice of time, strength, and money in

some degree worth while, during that hard, pioneer year at Ross, was the renewal of the old goodfellowship and intimacy with the tenants. Sixteen years is a big gap, but not so big that it cannot be bridged. Even had the gap been wider, I believe Martin's slender hand would have reached across it. As she has said of the relation between the Martins and their tenants—"The personal element was always warm in it . . . the hand of affection held it together. . . ."[1]

And so she and her mother proved it. It was the intense interest and affection which Martin had in and for the "Ross people" that made enjoyment march with what she believed to be her duty. She had a gift for doing, happily and beautifully, always the right thing, at no matter what cost to herself. A very unusual gift, and one of more value to others than to its possessor. One remembers the Arab steed, who dies at a gallop. It was not only that she was faithful and unselfish, but she so applied her intellect to obliterating all traces of her fidelity and her unselfishness, that their object strode, unconscious, into the soft place that she had prepared, and realised nothing of the self-sacrifice that had gone to its making. With her, it was impossible to say which was the more beautiful, the gentleness of heart, or the brilliance of intellect. I have heard that among the poor people

[1] Throughout these recollections I have, as far as has been possible, refrained from mentioning those who are still trying to make the best of a moderate kind of world. (Far be it from me to add to their trials!) I wish to say, however, in connection with the subject of this chapter, that in the struggle for life which so many of the Irish gentry had at this period to face, Martin's brothers and sisters were no less ardently engaged than were their mother and their youngest sister. In London, in India, in Ceylon, the Martins were doing "their country's work," as Mr. Kipling has sung, and although the fates at first prevented their taking a hand in person in the restoration of Ross, it is well known that "The Irish over the seas" are not in the habit of forgetting "their own people and their Father's House."

they called her The Gentle Lady ; in such a matter, poor people are the best judges.

In her first letters to me from Ross, the place it held in her heart is shown, and there is shown also some of the difficulties, the heartrendings, the inconveniences, the absurdities, of those first months of reclamation. No one but Martin herself will ever know what courage and capacity were required to cope with them. She overcame them all. Many times have I been a guest at Ross, and more wholly enjoyable visits seldom fall to anyone's lot. But the comfort and restored civilisation of the old house had cost a high price.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross, July, 1888.)

" It is a curious thing to be at Ross. But it does not seem as if we were—not yet. It takes a long time to patch the present Ross, and the one I remember, on to each other. It is, of course, smaller, and was, I think, disappointing, but it is *deeply* interesting, as you can imagine. It is also heartrending. . . . Everything looks ragged and unkempt, but it is a fine free feeling to sit up in this window and look abroad. There are plenty of trees left, and there is a wonderful Sleeping-Beauty-Palace air about everything, wildness, and luxuriance, and solitude. As to being lonely, or anything like it, it does not enter my mind. The amount of work to be done would put an end to that pretty fast. . . . The garden is, as the people told me, ' the height o' yerself in weeds,' not a walk visible. The hot-house, a sloping jungle of vines run wild ; the melon pit rears with great care a grove of nettles, the stableyard is a meadow. We inhabit five rooms in the house, the drawing-room having been made (by the caretakers) a kitchen. I could laugh and I could cry when I think of it. There is a small elderly mare here

MARTIN ROSS. H. A. C.

ROSS LAKE.

(belonging to the estate) whom we shall use. A charming creature, with a high character and a hollow back. I spent this morning in having her heels and mane and ears clipped, and it took two men, and myself, to hold her while her ears were being done. Car or conveyance we have none, at present, but we have many offers of cars. I drive Mama on these extraordinary farmers' cars, and oh! could you but see the harness! Mouldy leather, interludes of twine in the reins—terrific!"

There follow particulars of the innumerable repairs required in the house.

"My hand is shaking from working on the avenue, I mean cutting the edges of it, which will be my daily occupation for ever, as by the time I get to the end, I shall have to begin again, and both sides mean a mile and a quarter to keep right. . . . The tenants have been very good about coming and working here for nothing, except their dinners, and a great deal has been done by them. It is, of course, gratifying, but, in a way, very painful. The son of the old carpenter has been making a cupboard for me, also all for love. He is a very smart person and has been to America, but he is still the same 'Patcheen Lee'—(I have altered most of the names throughout—E.Œ.S.)—"whom Charlie and I used to beat with sticks till he was 'near dead,' as he himself says proudly.

"We have many visits from the poor people about, and the same compliments, and lamentations, and finding of likenesses goes on. This takes up a lot of time, and exhausts one's powers of rejoinder. Added to this, I don't know yet what to make of the people. . . . Of course some are really devoted, but there is a change, and I can feel it. I wish you had seen Paddy Griffy, a very active little old man, and a beloved of mine, when he came down on Sunday

night to welcome me. After the usual hand-kissings on the steps, he put his hands over his head and stood in the doorway, I suppose invoking his saint. He then rushed into the hall.

" ' Dance Paddy ! ' screamed Nurse Barrett (my foster-mother, now our maid-of-all-work).

" And he did dance, and awfully well too, to his own singing. Mama, who was attired in a flowing pink dressing-gown, and a black hat trimmed with lilac, became suddenly emulous, and, with her spade under her arm, joined in the jig. This lasted for about a minute, and was a never-to-be-forgotten sight. They skipped round the hall, they changed sides, they swept up to each other and back again, and finished with the deepest curtseys. . . . I went down to the Gate-house after dinner, and there discoursed Nurse Griffy for a long time." (At Ross, and probably elsewhere in the County Galway, the foster-mothers of " the Family " received the courtesy-title of " Nurse," and retained it for the rest of their lives. I have been at Ross when the three principal domestics were all ceremoniously addressed as " Nurse," and were alluded to, collectively, as " the Nursies." After all, at one time or another, there were probably twelve or fourteen ladies who had earned the title.) " I was amused by a little discourse about the badness of the shooting of the tenants here last winter " (*i.e.* the Englishmen who took the shooting). " Birds were fairly plenty, but the men couldn't hit them.

" ' 'Tis no more than one in the score they got ! ' says Paddy Griffy, who was one of the beaters, with full-toned contempt.

" ' Well, maybe they done their besht,' says Kitty Hynes, the Gate-house woman, who is always apologetic.

"'You spoke a thrue word,' says Paddy Griffy, 'Faith, they done their besht, Mrs. Hynes! I seen a great wisp o' shnipes going up before them, and the divil a one in it that didn't go from them! But you may believe they done their besht!'

"This wants the indescribable satisfaction of the speaker, and the ecstasy of Kitty Hynes at finding that she had said something wonderful."

This is a part of her first letter. To those unversed in Ireland and her ways, the latter may appear incredible, "nay, sometimes even terrible," as Ruskin says of the pine-trees; but as I think that enlightenment is good for the soul, I shall continue to give the history of the renewal of Ross, as set forth in Martin's letters, and these may present to the English reader (to whom I would specially commend the incident of the children's tea-party, in all its bearings) a new and not uninteresting facet in the social life of the most paradoxical country in the world.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (July '88. Ross.)

"I had not heard of F.'s death. It was a shock-He seemed a thoroughly alive and practical person. I don't know why it should be touching that he should rave of his hounds to the end, but it is. I suppose any shred of the ordinary interests is precious in a strange unnatural thing, like dying. I think often of a thing that a countrywoman here said to me the other day, apropos of her sons going away from her to America.

"'But what use is it to cry, even if ye dhragged the hair out o' yer head! Ye might as well be singin' an' dancin'.'

"She was crying when she said it, and was a wild-looking creature whom you would like to paint, and

the thing altogether stays in my mind." (And now abides in the mouth of Norry the Boat, in "The Real Charlotte.")

"Your letter spent 2 hours after its arrival in Nurse Barrett's pocket, while I entertained some thirty of the children about here. Tea, and bread and jam, and barm bracks"—(a sort of sweet loaf, made with barm, and "*brack*," *i.e.* "spotted," with currants)—"in the lawn, and races afterwards. I had a very wearying day. Cutting up food in the morning, and then at luncheon I received a great shock. I had asked a girl who teaches a National School to bring 12 of her best scholars, and besides these, we had only invited about half a dozen. At luncheon in comes the teacher's sister to say that the teacher had gone to Galway 'on business,' and that no children were coming. Boycotted, I thought at once. However I thought I would make an effort, even though I was told that the priest must have vetoed the whole thing, and I sent a whip round to the near villages, which are loyal, and away I went myself to two more. I never had such a facer as thinking the children were to be kept away, and with that I nearly cried while I was pelting over the fields. I could only find six children, of whom three were too young to come, and one was a Land Leaguer's. However two were to be had, and I pelted home again, very anxious. There I found the half dozen I knew would come, and divil another. I waited, and after I had begun to feel very low, I saw a little throng on the back avenue, poor little things, with their best frocks, such as they were. I could have kissed them, but gave them tea instead, and before it was over another bunch of children, including babies in arms, arrived, and there was great hilarity. I never shall understand what was the matter about the teacher.

She is a nice girl, but they are all cowards, and she may have thought she was running a risk. She was here to-day, with a present of eggs and white cabbage, which was a peace offering, of course."

In those bad times this form of stabbing friendship in the back was very popular. I remember how, a few years earlier, a Christmas feast to over a hundred National School children was effectively boycotted, the sole reason being a resolve on the part of the ruling powers to discourage anything so unseasonable as Peace on Earth and good will towards ladies. These dark ages are now, for the most part, past. Possibly, some day, a people naturally friendly and kind-hearted will be permitted to realise that patriotism means loving their country, instead of hating their neighbours.

At Ross, happily, the hostile influence had but small strength for evil. Had it been even stronger, I think it would not long have withstood the appeal that was made to the chivalry of the people by the gallant fight to restore the old ways, the old friendship.

Martin's letter continues :

"The presents are very touching, but rather embarrassing, and last week there was a great flow of them ; they included butter, eggs, a chicken, and a bottle of port ; all from different tenants, some very poor. An experience of last week was going to see a party of sisters who are tenants, and work their farm themselves. In the twinkling of an eye I was sitting 'back in the room,' with the sisterhood exhausting themselves in praise of my unparalleled beauty, and with a large glass of potheen before me, which I knew had got to be taken somehow. It was much better than I expected, and I got through a respectable amount of it before handing it on with a flourish to one of my hostesses, which was looked on as the height

of politeness. I wish I could remember some of the criticisms that went on all the time.

" ' I *assure* you, Miss Wilet, you are very handsome, I may say beautiful.' ' I often read of beauty in books, but indeed we never seen it till to-day. Indeed you are a perfect creature.' ' All the young ladies in Connemara may go to bed now. Sure they're nothing but upstarts.' ' And it's not only that you're lovely, but so commanding. Indeed you have an imprettive look ! ' This, I believe, means imperative. Then another sister took up the wondrous tale. ' Sure we're all enamoured by you ! '

" This and much more, and I just sat and laughed weakly and drunkenly. Many other precious things I lost, as all the sisters talked together, yea, they answered one to another. Custom has taken the edge off the admiration now, I am grieved to say, but it still exists, and the friend of my youth, Patcheen Lee, is especially dogmatic in pronouncing upon my loveliness. I am afraid all these flowers of speech will have faded before you get here ; they will then begin upon you."

Another extract from the letters of these early days I will give. The sister whose return to Ross is told of was Geraldine, wife of Canon Edward Hewson ; [1] it is her account of Martin, as a little child, that is given in Chapter VIII.

" Geraldine felt this place more of a nightmare than I did. The old days were more present with her, naturally, than with me. I pitied her when she came up the steps. She couldn't say a word for a long time. There was a bonfire at the gate in her honour in the evening, built just as we described it

[1] Mrs. Hewson died July, 1917.

in the Shocker, a heap of turf, glowing all through, and sticks at the top. Poor Geraldine was so tired I had to drive her down to it, but she went very gallant and remembered the people very well. There was little cheering or demonstrativeness, but there was a great deal of conversation and some slight and inevitable subsequent refreshment in the form of porter.

"I can hardly tell you what it felt like to see the bonfire blazing there, just as it used to in my father's time, when he and the boys and all of us used to come down when someone was being welcomed home, and it was all the most natural thing in the world. It was very different to see Geraldine walk in front of us through the wide open gates, between the tall pillars, with her white face and her black clothes. Thady Connor, the old steward, met her at the gate, and not in any 'Royal enclosure' could be surpassed the way he took off his hat, and came silently forward to her, while everyone else kept back, in dead silence too. Of course they had all known her well. What with that glare of the bonfire, and the lit circle of faces, and the welcome killed with memories for her, I wonder how she stood it. It was the attempt at the old times that was painful and wretched, at least I thought it so. Edward was wonderful, in a trying position. In about two minutes he was holding a group of men in deep converse without any apparent effort, and he was much approved of.

"'A fine respectable gentleman'—'The tallest man on the property'—such were the comments."

There are two poems that were written many years ago, by one of the tenants, one Jimmy X., a noted poet, in praise of the Martins and of Ross, and mysteriously blended with these themes is a eulogy of a

certain musician, who was also a tenant. The first few verses were dictated to Martin, I know not by whom; the last three were written for her by the poet himself; his spelling lends a subtle charm. To read it, giving the lines their due poise and balance, demands skill, the poem being of the modern mode, metrical, but rhymeless. There is a tune appertaining to it which offers some assistance in the matter of stress, but it must here be divorced from its words; since, however, it is a tune of maddening and haunting incompleteness, a tune that has "no earthly close," one of those tunes, in fact, that are of the nature of a possession (in an evil and spiritual sense), this need not be regretted.

ROSS.

It is well known through Ireland
That Ross it is a fine place
The healthiest in climate
That ever yet was known.

When you get up in the morning
Ye'll hear the thrishes warbling
The cuckoo playing most charming
Which echoes the place.

The birds they join in chorus
To hum their notes melodious
The bees are humming music
All over the demesne.

The place it being so holy
It is there they live in glory,
Honey is flowing
And rolling there in sthrames.

There follows a panegyric of "Robert Martin Esqur," the Bard lamenting his inability to "tell the lovely fatures of the noble gentleman."

" Indeed," he continues, " it sprung through nature
For this gentleman being famous,
The Martins were the bravest
That ever were before.

" With Colonels and good Majors
Who fought with many nations,
I'm sure twas them that gained it
On the plains of Waterloo."

Thus far the dictation; the following four verses are as they came from the hand of their maker.

A song composed for Robirt Martin Esqur and one of his tinants

1st varce

Its now we have a tradesman
The best in any nation,
He never met his eaquils, he went to tullamore.
He played in Munstereven
The tune of Nora Chrena
But Garryown delighted the natives of the town.

2nd

He can write music
Play it and peruse it
A man in deep concumption from death he revive
But from the first creation
There was never yet his eaquels
So clever and ingenious with honour and renown.

3rd virce

Patrick he resayved them
So deacent and so plesant
He is as nice a man in features as I ever saw before
When they sat to his table with turkeys and bacon
With Brandy and good ale he would suplie as many more.
He got aninvetation to Dublin with they ladies
They brought him in their pheatons he was playing as they were going
He is the best fluit player from Cliften to Glasnevan
They thought he was inchanted his music was so neat.

4th virce

His fluit is above mention
It is the best youtencal (*utensil*)
That ever yet was mentioned sunce the race of Man
He got it by great intrest as a presant from the gentry
It was sent to him by finvarra the rular of Nockma.

There are many more varces (or virces) in which the glories of Ross, of "Robirt" Martin, and of his "tinant," are hymned with equal ardour, but I think these samples suffice.

CHAPTER XIV

RICKEEN

The journey from Drishane to Ross was first made by me in February, 1889. As the conventional crow flies, or as, on the map, the direct line is drawn, the distance is no more than a hundred miles, but by the time you have steered east to Cork, and north-west to Limerick, and north to Ennis, and to Athenry, and to Galway, with prolonged changes (and always for the worse), at each of these places, you begin to realise the greatness of Ireland, and to regard with awe the independent attitude of mind of her railway companies. It would indeed seem that the Sinn Fein movement, "Ourselves Alone," might have been conceived and brought forth by any one of the lines involved in the *trajet* from Cork to Galway. I cannot say what are the conditions now, but there was a time when each connecting link was separated by an interval of just as many minutes as enabled the last shriek of the train as it left the station to madden the ear of the traveller. Once I have been spared this trial; it was at Limerick; a member of the staff was starting with his bride on their honeymoon. The station palpitated; there were white satin ribbons on the engine, a hoar-frost of rice on the platform; there was also a prolonged and sympathetic delay, while the bride kissed the remainder of the staff.

And thus, with the aid of a fleet porter, and by travelling in "fateful Love's high fellowship," I succeeded in shortening my journey by some two hours, and in taking unawares the train at "The Junction" (which, as everyone in Munster knows, is the Limerick Junction).

February is a bad month for the West of Ireland, but there are places, like people, that rely on features and are independent of complexion. Ross was grey and cold, windy, rainy, and snowy, but its beauty did not fail. Martin and I heeded the occasional ill-temper of the weather as little as two of the wild duck whom we so assiduously strove to shoot. We had been lent a boat and a gun, and there are not many pleasanter things to do in a still February twilight than to paddle quietly along the winding waterways among the tall pale reeds of Ross Lake; in the thrilling solitude and secrecy of those dark and polished paths anything may be expected, from a troop of wild swans, or the kraken, down to the alternative thrill of the splashing, swishing burst upwards of the duck, as the boat invades their hidden haven. We walked enormously; visiting the people in the little villages on the estate, making exciting and precarious short cuts across bogs; getting "bushed" in those strange wildernesses, where hazel and blackthorn scrub has squeezed up between the thick-sown limestone boulders of West Galway, and a combination has resulted that makes as impenetrable a barrier as can well be imagined. We wandered in the lovely Wood of Annagh, lovely always, but loveliest as I saw it later on, in April, when primroses, like faint sunlight, illumined every glade and filled the wood with airs of Paradise. We explored the inmost recesses of Tully Wood, which is a place of mystery, with a prehistoric baptismal "bullán" stone, and chapel, in its depths.

There are quagmires in Tully, " shwally-holes " hidden in sedge among the dark fir-trees, and somewhere, deep in it, you may come on a tiny lake among the big, wildly-scattered pine-stems, and a view between them over red and brown bog to the pale, windy mountains of Connemara.

I was having a holiday from writing, and was painting any model, old or young, that I could suborn to my use. We searched the National Schools for red-haired children, for whom I had a special craving, and, after considerable search, were directed to ask in Doone for the house of one Kennealy, which harboured " a Twin," " a foxy Twin " ; and there found " The Twin," *i.e.* two little girls of surpassing ugliness, but with hair of such burnished copper as is inevitably described by the phrase " such as Titian would have loved to paint."

There are few evasions of a difficulty more bromidic and more unwarrantable. " A sunset such as Turner would have loved to paint." " A complexion such as Sir Joshua would have loved to paint." The formula is invariable. It is difficult to decide whether the stricken incapacity of description, or the presumption of a layman in selecting for a painter his subject, is the more offensive.

" Oh, what a handsome sunset you have ! "

I have heard at a garden party a lady thus compliment the proprietor of the decoration.

" I know," she turned to me, " that you're delighting in it ! What a pity you haven't your easel with you ! " (Nothing else, presumably, was required.) The attitude of mind is the same, but there is much in the way a thing is said.

A special joy was imparted to Martin's and my wanderings about Ross by the presence of the Puppet. I had brought him to Paris (and Martin and I had

together smuggled him home under the very nose of the *Douane*); he had accompanied me on a yachting excursion (in the course of which I walked on deck in my sleep, and very nearly walked overboard, the Puppet following me faithfully; in which case we should neither of us have ever been heard of again, as the tide-race in Youghal Harbour is no place for a bad swimmer). He had paid many and various visits with me, and had passed from a luxury into a necessity. Naturally he came with me to Ross. He was a very small fox terrier, rather fast in manner, but engaging; with a heart framed equally for love or war, and a snub nose. His official name was Patsey; a stupid name, I admit, and conventional to exhaustion, but of a simplicity that popularised him. There are a few such names, for humans as for dogs. I need give but one instance, Bill. (I do not refer to the Bills of humbler life, though I am not sure that the rule does not apply there also.) The man who hails his friend as "Bill" feels himself, in so doing, a humourist, which naturally endears Bill to him.

It was Fanny Currey, by the way, who called Patsey "The Puppet" (as a variant of "The Puppy"). There are not many people with any pretensions to light and leading who did not know Miss Fanny Currey of Lismore. She is dead now, and Ireland is a poorer place for her loss. I will not now try to speak of her brilliance and versatility. She was, among her many gifts, a profound and learned dog-owner, and though her taste had been somewhat perverted by dachshunds (which can degenerate into a very lowering habit), it was an honour to any little dog to be noticed by her.

The Puppet had various accomplishments. He wept when rebuked, and, sitting up penitentially, real tears would course one another down his brief

and innocent nose. He could walk on his forelegs only; he could jump bog-drains that would daunt a foxhound; even the tall single-stone walls of Galway, that crumble at a touch, could not stop him. The carpenter at Ross was so moved by his phenomenal activity that he challenged me to "lep my dog agin his." His dog, a collie, was defeated, and the carpenter said, generously, that he "gave it in to the Puppet that he was dam' wise."

Many were the vicissitudes through which that little dog came safely. A mad dog in Castle Haven missed him by a hair's breadth. (The hair, one supposes, of the dog that did *not* bite him.) Distemper fits in Paris were only just mastered. (It is worthy of note that the cure was effected by strong coffee, prescribed by a noted vet. of the Quartier Latin.) In battles often, in perils of the sea; nor shall I soon forget a critical time in infancy, when, as my diary sourly relates, "Jack and Hugh" (two small and savage brothers) "rushed to me in state of frantic morbid delight, to tell me that the puppy had thrown up a huge worm, and was dying."

And all these troubles he survived only to die of poison at Ross. But this came later, during my second visit, and during that first and happy time the Puppet and Martin and I enjoyed ourselves without let or hindrance.

It is long now since I have been in Galway, and I know that many of the poor people with whom Martin and I used to talk, endlessly, and always, for us, interestingly, have gone over to that other world where she now is. Of them all, I think the one most beloved by her was the little man of whom she discoursed in one of the chapters of "Some Irish Yesterdays" as "Rickeen." This was not his name, but it will serve. Rickeen was of the inmost and straitest

sect of the Ross tenants. His farm, which was a very small one, was, I imagine, run by his wife and children; he, being rightly convinced that Ross House and all appertaining to it would fall in ruin without his constant attention, spent his life "about the place," in the stables, the garden, the house; and wherever he was, he was talking, and that, usually and preferably, to "Miss Wilet."

The adoration that was given to her by all the people found its highest expression in Rickeen. She was his religion, the visible saint whom he worshipped, he gave her his supreme confidence. I believe he spoke the truth to her. More can hardly be said.

Rickeen was a small, dark fellow, with black whiskers, and a pale, sharp-featured face. We used to think that he was like a London clergyman, rather old-fashioned, yet broad in his views. He had a passion for horses and dogs, and was unlike most of his fellows in a certain poetic regard for such frivolous by-products of nature as flowers and birds. I can see Rickeen on a fair May morning pulling off his black slouch hat to Martin and me, with the shine of the sun on his high forehead, on which rings of sparse black hair straggled, his dark eyes beaming, and I can hear his soft-tuned Galway voice saying:

"Well, glory be to God, Miss Wilet, this is a grand day! And great growth entirely in the weather! Faith, I didn't think to see it so good at all to-day, there was two o' thim planets close afther the moon last night!"

And he would probably go on to tell us of the garden o' praties he had, and the "bumbles and the blozzums they had on them. Faith, I'd rather be lookin' at them than ateing me dinner!" (The term "bumbles" referred, we gathered, to buds.)

Martin would contentedly spend a morning in

scraping paths and raking gravel with Rickeen, and, having a marvellous gift of memory, would justify herself of her idleness by repeating to me, at length, one of his recitals. Some of these, as will presently be discovered, she has written down, but the written word is a poor thing. "When the lamp is shattered, the light in the dust lies dead." For anyone who knew the perfection of Martin's rendering of the tones of West Galway, of the gestures, the pauses, that give the life of a story, the words lying dead on the page are only a pain. Perhaps, some day, portable and bindable phonography will be as much part of a book as its pictures are.

Phonetic spelling in matters of dialect is a delusive thing, to be used with the utmost restraint. It is superfluous for those who know, boring for those who do not. Of what avail is spelling when confronted with the problem of indicating the pronunciation of, for example, "Papa"; the slurring and softening of the consonant, the flattening of the vowel sound —how can these be even indicated? And, spelling or no, can any tongue, save an Irish one, pronounce the words "being" and "ideal," as though they owned but one syllable? Long ago Martin and I debated the point, and the conclusion that we then arrived at was that the root of the matter in questions of dialect was in the idiomatic phrase and the mental attitude. The doctrine of "Alice's" friend, the Duchess, still seems to me the only safe guide. "Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves."

There was a sunny spring afternoon at Ross, and Martin and Rickeen and I and the Puppet went forth together to erect a wall of "scraws," *i.e.* sods, round the tennis ground. As soon as there was a sufficient elevation for the purpose, we seated ourselves on the

scraws, and the business of conversation with Rickeen, that had, in some degree, been interfered with by his labours in scraw-cutting and lifting, was given full scope. The Puppet was a little below us, hunting young rabbits in the dead bracken. At intervals we could see him, proceeding in grasshopper springs through the bracken (which is the correct way to draw heavy covert, as all truly sporting little dogs know), throughout we could hear him. Rooks in the tall elms behind the stables, feeding their young ones, made a pleasing undercurrent of accompaniment to the Puppet's soprano solo. There was a bloom of green over the larches; scraps of silver glinting between the tree stems represented the lake. The languor of spring was in the air, and it seemed exercise enough to watch Rickeen's wondrous deftness in marking, cutting, and lifting the scraws on the blade of his narrow spade, and tossing them accurately on to their appointed spot on the rising wall.

Martin had a Maltese charm against the "*Mal Occhio*"; a curious silver thing, whose design included a branch of the Tree of Life, and clenched fists, and a crescent moon, and other symbolisms. This, and its uses, she expounded to Rickeen, and he, in his turn, offered us his experience of the Evil Eye, and of suitable precautions against it.

"Look now, Miss Wilet, if a pairson 'd say 'that's a fine gerr'l,' or 'a fine cow,' or the like o' that, and wouldn't say 'God bless him!' that's what we'd call 'Dhroch Hool.'[1] That's the Bad Eye. Maybe, then, the one he didn't say 'God bless them' to would fall back, or dhrop down, or the like o' that; and then, supposin' a pairson 'd folly the one that gave the Bad Eye, and to bring him back, and then if that one 'd bate three spits down on the one that was lyin'

[1] I think it best to spell all the Irish phrases phonetically.

sthritched, and to say 'God bless him,' he'd be all right."

Strange how wide is the belief in the protective power of this simple provision of Nature. From the llama to the cat, it is relied on, and by the cat, no doubt, it was suggested to the human being as a means of defiance and frustration. There was a beggar-woman who, as my mother has told me, did not fail on the occasion of any of our christenings to bestow upon the infant an amulet of this nature. She had a magnificent oath, reserved, I imagine, for great occasions.

"By the Life of Pharaoh!" she would say, advancing upon the baby, "I pray that all bad luck may be beyant ye, and that my luck may be in your road before ye!"

The amulet would then be administered.

Martin and Rickeen and I discoursed, I remember, for some time upon these subjects. The mysterious pack of white hounds who hunt the woods of Ross, whose music has been heard more than once, and the sight of which has been vouchsafed to some few favoured ones, was touched on, and Martin told of an Appearance that had come to her and some of her brothers and sisters, one dusky evening, in the Ross avenue. Something that was first like a woman walking quickly towards them, and then rose, vast and toppling, like a high load of hay, and then sank down into nothingness.

"Ah sure, the Avenue!" said Rickeen, as one that sets aside the thing that is obvious. "No one wouldn't know what 'd be in it. There was one that seen fairies as thick as grass in it, and they havin' red caps on them!"

He turned from us, and fell to outlining the scraws that he was going to cut. We watched him for a

space, while the afternoon shadow of the house crept nearer to us down the slope, and Martin began to talk of the coach that drives to Ross when the head of the house dies. At the death of her grandfather she had been too little to comprehend such things.

"I can only remember 'The Old Governor' in snatches," she said.

From across the lake the rattle of the mail car on the Galway road came, faintly, and mysterious enough to have posed as the sound of the ghostly coach. The staccato hunting yelps of the Puppet had died down, and from among the boughs of a small beech tree, a little hapless dwarf of a tree, twisted by a hundred thwarted intentions, a thrush flung a spray of notes into the air, bright and sudden as an April shower. Rickeen paused.

"Ye'd like to be leshnin' to the birds screechin'," he remarked appreciatively; "But now, Miss Wilet, as for the coach, I dunno. There's quare things goin'; ye couldn't hardly say what harm 'd be in them, only ye'd friken when ye meet them." He gave his white flannel bauneen, which is a loose coat, an extra twist, stuffing the corners that he had twisted together inside the band of his trousers, and entered upon his narration.

"I remember well the time the Owld Governor, that's yer grandfather, died. Your father was back in Swineford, in the County Mayo, the same time, and the Misthress sent for me and she give me a letther for him. 'Take the steamer to Cong,' says she, 'and dhrive then, and don't rest till ye'll find him.'

"But sure Louisa Laffey, that was at the Gate-house that time, she says to me, 'Do not,' says she, 'take the steamer at all,' says she. 'Go across the ferry," says she, 'an' dhrive to Headford and ye'll get another car there.'

"I was a big lump of a boy that time, twenty years

an' more maybe, and faith, I didn't let on, but God knows I was afraid goin' in it. 'Twas night on me when I got to Headford, and when I wint to th' hotel that was in it, faith sorra car was before me; but the gerr'l that was mindin' th' hotel says, 'D'ye see the house over with the light in it?' 'I do,' says I. 'Maybe ye'd get a car in it,' says she. Faith, the man that was there ruz out of his bed to come with me!"

A pause, to permit us to recognise the devotion of the man.

"We went dhrivin' then," resumed Rickeen, with a spacious gesture, "dhrivin' always, and it deep in the night, and we gettin' on till it was near Claremorris, back in the County Mayo. Well, there was a hill there, and a big wood, and when we come there was a river, and it up with the road, and what 'd rise out of it only two wild duck! Faith, the horse gave a lep and threwn herself down, an' meself was thrown a-past her, and the man the other side, and he broke his little finger, and the harness was broke."

He dwelt for a moment on the memory, and we made comment.

"What did we do, is it?" Rickeen went on. "To walk into the town o' Swineford we done. 'It's hardly we'll find a house open in it,' says the fella that was dhrivin' me. But what 'd it be but the night before the Fair o' Swineford, and there was lads goin' to the fair that had boots for mendin', and faith we seen the light in the shoemaker's house when we come into the town."

"That was luck for you," said Martin.

Rickeen turned his dark eyes on her, and then on me, with an expression that had in it something of pity, and something of triumph, the triumph of the story-teller who has a stone in his sling.

"'Twas a half door was in it," he went on, "and

when I looked over the door, faith I started when I seen the two that was inside, an' they sewin' boots. Two brothers they were, an' they as small—!" He spread forth his two lean brown hands at about three feet above the ground, "an' not as much mate on them as 'd bait a mouse thrap, an' they as quare—!" He turned aside, and secretly spat behind his hand. "Faith, I wasn't willin' to go in where they were. 'Twasn't that they were that small entirely, nor they had no frump on thim——"

"No *what*, Rick?" we ventured.

"No frump like, on their shoulder," Rick said, with an explanatory hand indicating a hump; "but faith, above all ever I seen I wouldn't wish to go next or nigh them!

"The man that was with me put a bag on the horse's head. 'Come inside,' says he, 'till they have the harness mended.' 'I'll stay mindin' the horse,' says I, 'for fear would she spill the oats.' 'I know well,' says he, 'ye wouldn't like to go in where thim is!' 'Well then, God knows I would not!' says I, 'above all ever I seen!'"

"And had they the Bad Eye?" said Martin.

Rickeen again turned aside, and the propitiatory or protective act was repeated.

"I dunno what way was in thim," he replied, cautiously, "but b'lieve me 'twas thim that could sew!"

At this point a long and seemingly tortured squeal from the Puppet told that the rabbit had at long last broken covert. I cannot now remember if he or the rabbit had the pre-eminence—I think the rabbit—but the immediate result was that for us the story of those Leprechaun brethren remained unfinished, which is, perhaps, more stimulating, and leaves the imagination something to play with.

CHAPTER XV

FAITH AND FAIRIES

In our parts of Ireland we do not for a moment pretend to be too civilised for superstition. When Cromwell offered the alternative of "Hell or Connaught," with, no doubt, the comfortable feeling that it was a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other, more creatures than he knew of accepted the latter refuge. And when, in the County Cork, the ancient saying was proved that "Beyond the Leap" —which is a village about twelve miles inland from the Western Ocean—was indeed "beyond the Law," and that the King's writ, if it ran at all, ran for its life in the wrong direction, sanctuary was found there, also, for more than the hard-pressed people of the land.

The "Fairies and Bridhogues and Witches" of the old song fled west and south; in Galway, in Kerry and in Cork, they are still with us. Have I not seen and handled a little shoe that was found in a desolate pass of the Bantry mountains? It was picked up seventy or eighty years ago by a countryman, who was crossing a pass at dawn to fetch the doctor to his child. It is about two and a half inches long, and is of leather, in all respects like a countryman's brogue, a little worn, as if the wearer had had it in use for some time. The countryman gave it to the doctor, and the doctor's

niece showed it to me, and if anyone can offer a more reasonable suggestion than that a Leprechaun made it for a fairy customer, who, like Cinderella, dropped it at a dance in the mountains, I should be glad to hear it.

At Delphi, in Connemara, to two brothers, a Bishop and a Dean of the Irish Church, many years before its disestablishment, when Bishops were Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and by no means people to be trifled with, to these, and to their sister, there came visibly down the beautiful Erriff river a boatload of fairies. They disembarked at a little strand—one of those smooth and golden river strands that were obviously created in order to be danced on by fairies—and there the fairies danced, under the eyes of "Tom of Tuam" (thus I have heard that Bishop irreverently spoken of by my cousin Nannie Martin), and of his brother, the Dean, and of their sister; but to what music I know not. They were possibly related to the Ross fairies, as it was noted (by the Bishop's sister, I believe) that they "wore red caps, and were very small and graceful."

Not half a mile from Drishane Gate there is a little wood that has not the best of reputations. At its western end there is an opening, out of the road that traverses it, that has been immemorially called the Fairies' Gap. I have in vain striven to obtain the facts as to the Fairies' Gap. Such information as was obtainable had no special connection with Those People, yet was vague and disquieting. That there was Something within in the wood, and it might come out at you when you'd be going through it late of an evening, but if "you could have a Friendly Ghost to be with you, there could no harm happen you." The thought of the friendly ghost is strangely soothing and reassuring; perhaps oftener than one knows

one has a kind and viewless companion to avert danger.

Only eighteen months ago I was told of an old man who was coming from the West into Castle Townshend village to get his separation allowance. " A decent old man he was too, and he a tailor, with a son in the army in France. He was passing through the wood, and it duskish, and what would he see but the road full of ladies, ten thousand of them, he thought. They passed him out, going very quietly, like nuns they were, and there was one o' them, and when she passed him out, he said she looked at him so pitiful, ' Faith,' says the old tailor, ' if I had a fi' pun note to my name I'd give it in Masses for her soul ! ' "

I was told by a woman, a neighbour of mine, of a young wife who lived among these hills, and was caught away by the fairies and hidden under Liss Ard Lake. " A little girl there was, of the Driscolls, that was sent to Skibbereen on a message, and when she was coming home, at the bridge, east of the lake, one met her, and took her in under the lake entirely. And she seen a deal there, and great riches ; and who would she meet only the young woman that was whipped away. ' Let you not eat e'er a thing,' says she to the little girl, ' the way Theirselves 'll not be able to keep you.' She told the little girl then that she should tell her husband that on a night in the week she would go riding with the fairies, and to let him wait at the cross-roads above on Bluidth. Herself would be on the last horse of them, and he a white horse, and when the husband 'd see her, he should catch a hold of her, and pull her from the horse, and keep her. The little girl went home, and she told the husband. The husband said surely he would go and meet her the way she told him ; but the father of the woman told him he would be better leave her with

them now they had her, as he would have no more luck with her, and in the latter end the husband was said by him, and he left the woman with them."

I know the cross-roads above on Bluidth; often, coming back from hunting, "and it duskish," with the friendly hounds round my horse, and my home waiting for me, I have thought of the lost woman that was riding the white horse at the end of the fairy troop, and of the tragic eyes that watched in vain for the coward husband.

* * * * *

We have, or had, a saint in Castle Haven parish, Saint Barrahane was his name, and his Well of Baptism is still honoured and has the usual unattractive tributes of rag on its over-shadowing thorn-bush. The well is in a deep, wooded glen, just above a graveyard that is probably of an equal age with it. The graveyard lies on the shore, under the lee of that castle that stood the bombardment from Queen Elizabeth's sea captains; the sea has made more than one sally to invade the precincts, but the protecting sea wall, though it has been undermined and sometimes thrown down, has not, so far, failed of its office. It is considered a good and fortunate place to be buried in. All my people lie there, and I think there should be luck for those who lie in a place of such ancient sanctity. It is held that the last person who is buried in it has to keep the graveyard in order, and—in what way is not specified—to attend to the wants of his neighbours. I can well remember seeing a race between two funerals, as to which should get their candidate to the graveyard first. A very steep and winding lane leads down to the sea, and down it thundered the carts with the coffins, and their following *cortéges*.

In the next parish to Castle Haven there is a grave-

E. Œ. SOMERVILLE ON TARBRUSH.

yard lonelier even than that of Saint Barrahane. Like most of the ancient burial places it is situated close to the sea, probably to permit of the funerals taking place by boat, in times when roads hardly existed. There, at the top of the cliffs, among the ruins of a church, and among the dreadful wreck of tombs too old even for tradition to whisper whose once they were, there took place, not long ago, the funeral of a certain woman, who was well known and well loved. I was told of an old beggar-woman who walked many miles to see the last of a friend.

"She rose early, and she hasted, and she was at the gate of the graveyard when the funeral was coming," another woman told me; "an' when she seen them, and they carrying in the corpse, she let the owld cloak back from her. And when she seen the corpse pass her, she threw up the hands, and says she, 'That your journey may thrive wid ye!'"

That journey that we think to be so long and dark and difficult. Perhaps we may find, as in so many of our other journeys, that it is the preparation and the setting forth that are the hardest part of it.

In Ireland, at all events, it is certain that a warning to the traveller, or to the friends of the traveller, is sometimes vouchsafed. Things happen that are explainable in no commonsense, commonplace way; things of which one can only say that they are withdrawals for an instant of the curtain that veils the spiritual from the material. I speak only of what I have personal knowledge, and I will not attempt to justify my beliefs to anyone who may consider either that I have deceived myself, or that the truth is not in me. In the spring of 1886 one of my great-aunts died. She had been a Herbert, from the County Kerry, and had married my grandfather's brother, Major John Somerville. Her age "went with the

century," and when heavy illness came upon her there was obviously but little hope of her recovery. I went late one afternoon to inquire for her. She lived in a small house just over the sea, and my way to it from Drishane lay through a dark little grove of tall trees ; a high cliff shut out the light on one hand, below the path were the trees, straining up to the height of the cliff, and below the trees, the sea, which, on that February evening, strove, and tossed, and growled. The last news had been that she was better, but as I went through the twilight of the trees a woman's voice quite near me was lifted up in a long howl, ending in sobs. I said to myself that Aunt Fanny was dead, and this was " Nancyco," her ancient dairy-woman, keening her. In a moment I heard the cry and the sobs again, such large, immoderate sobs as countrywomen dedicate to a great occasion, and as I hurried along that gloomy path the crying came a third time. Decidedly Aunt Fanny was dead. Arrived at the house, it was quite a shock to hear that, on the contrary, she was better. I asked, with some indignation, why, this being so, Nancyco was making such a noise. I was told that Nancyco hadn't been " in it " all day ; that she was at home, and that there was no one " in it." I said naught of my Banshee, but when, three days afterwards, the old lady slipped out through that opening in the curtain, I remembered her warning.

Such a thing has happened thrice in my knowledge ; the second time on a lovely June night, the night of the eve of St. John, when every hill was alight with bonfires, and one might hope the powers of evil were propitiated and at rest. Yet, on that still and holy night, six boys and girls, the children of some of my father's tenants, were drowned on their way home from a church festival that they had attended at Ross

Carbery. The party of eight young people had rowed along the coast to Ross harbour, and of the eight but two returned. At "the mid-hour of night" my sister, who was then only a child, came running to my room for shelter and reassurance. She had been wakened by the crying of a woman, in the garden under her window; the crying came in successive bursts, and she was frightened. At breakfast the news of the drowning was brought to my father. It had happened near an island, and it was at just about the time that the voice had broken the scented peace of the June night that the boatload of boys and girls were fighting for their lives in the black water, and some of them losing the fight.

One other time also I know of, though the warning was not, as I might have expected, given to me personally. The end was near, and the voice cried beneath the windows of the room in which Martin lay. The hearing of it was, perhaps in mercy, withheld from me. The anguish of those December days of 1915 needed no intensifying.

CHAPTER XVI

BELIEFS AND BELIEVERS

THERE is, I imagine, some obscure connection between the Fairies and the Evil Eye. There was "an old Cronachaun of a fellow," who lived in the parish of Myross, who was said to be "away with the Fairies" a great deal, and, whether as a resulting privilege or not I cannot say, he also had the Bad Eye. It was asserted that he could go to the top of Mount Gabriel, which is a good twenty miles away, in five minutes. It seems a harmless feat, but it must be said that Mount Gabriel, in spite of its name, is not altogether to be trusted. It is the sort of place where the "Fodheen Mara" might come on at any moment. The Fodheen Mara is a sudden loss of your bearings, and a bewilderment as to where you are, that prevails, like a miasma, in certain spots; but, Rickeen has told me, "if a person 'd have as much sense as to turn anything he'd have on him inside out, he'd know the way again in the minute." Or the "Fare Gurtha" might assail you, and it is even more awful than the Fodheen Mara, being a sudden starvation that doubles you up and kills you, unless you can instantly get food. Also, on Mount Gabriel's summit there is a lake, and it is well known that a heifer that ran into the lake came back to her owner out of the sea, "below in Schull harbour," which implies something wrong, somewhere.

A neighbour of the old Cronachaun (which means a dwarfish cripple), and presumably a rival in the Black Arts, was accused by the Cronachaun's wife of being "an owld wicked divil of a witch-woman, who is up to ninety years, but she can't die because she's that bad the Lord won't take her! Sure didn't she look out of her door and see meself going by, and says she 'Miggera Murth'! (and that means 'misfortune to ye') and the owld daughther she has, she looked out too, and she says, three times over, 'Amin-a-heerna!' and after that what did I do but to fall off the laddher and break me leg!"

"Amin-a-heerna" is a reiterated amen. No wonder the curse operated.

I have myself, when pursuing the harmless trade of painter, been credited with the possession of the Evil Eye. In the Isle of Aran, Martin has told how "at the first sight of the sketch book the village street becomes a desert; the mothers, spitting to avert the Bad Eye, snatch their children into their houses, and bang their doors. The old women vanish from the door-steps, the boys take to the rocks." We are too civilised now in West Carbery to hold these opinions, but I can recollect the speed with which an old man, a dweller in an unfashionable part of Castle Townshend, known as Dirty Lane, fled before me down that thoroughfare, declaring that the Lord should take him, and no one else (a *jeu d'esprit* which I cannot but think was unintentional).

Probably

> "In the dacent old days
> Before stockings and stays
> Were invented, or breeches, top-boots and top-hats,"

all illness was attributed to ill-wishers. It is certain that charms and remedies, all more or less disgusting, are still relied on, and are exhibited with a faith that

is denied to the doctor's remedies, and that wins half the battle in advance.

" Ha, thim docthors ! " said a dissatisfied patient on hearing of the death of his medical adviser. " They can let themselves die too ! "

I think it advisable, for many reasons, to withhold such recipes as I can now recall, but I may offer a couple of samples that will possibly check any desire for more.

In typhoid fever : " close out " all the windows, and anoint the patient from head to foot with sheep's butter.

In whooping-cough : the patient should be put " under an ass, and over an ass " ; but a better method is to induce a gander to spit down the sufferer's throat.

" A lucky hand " in doctor or nurse is of more value than many diplomas. There is an old woman whose practice has been untrammelled by the fetters or follies of science.

" The cratures ! " she says of her clients. " They sends for me, and I goes to them, and I gives them the best help I can. And sure the Lord Almighty's very thankful to me ; He'd be glad of a help too."

She is now " pushing ninety," but she is still helping.

If a quack is not procurable, a doctor with a hot temper is generally well thought of. Martin made some notes of a conversation that she had with a countryman in West Carbery, which exemplified this fact. The " Old Doctor " referred to was noted for his potency in language as in physic, and it was valued.

" Lave him curse, Ma'am ! " whispered a patient to the doctor's expostulating wife, " For God's sake, lave him curse ! "

" I had to wait in a hayfield at the top of the Glen," Martin's notes record, " while E. was haranguing at a

cottage about a litter of cubs, whose Mamma considered that chicken, now and then, was good for them. There was a man making the hay into small cocks, with much the same delicate languor with which an invalid arranges an offering of flowers. Glandore Harbour was spread forth below me, a lovely space of glittering water, and the music of invisible larks drifted down in silver shreds through air that trembled with heat. This, I thought, is a good place in which to be, and I selected a haycock capable of supporting me, and the haymaker and I presently fell into converse. The talk, I now forget why, turned to the medical profession.

" 'Thim Cork docthors was very nice,' said the man, pausing from his labours, and seating himself upon a neighbouring haycock, 'but sure docthors won't do much for the likes of us, only for ladies and gentlemen. Ye should be the Pink of Fashion for them!'

" He surveyed me narrowly; apparently the thickness of the soles of my boots inspired him with confidence.

" 'Ye're a counthry lady, and ye have understanding of poor people. Some o' thim docthors would be sevare on poor people if their houses wouldn't be—' he considered, and decided that the expression was good enough to bear repetition, '—wouldn't be the Pink of Fashion. Well, the Owld Docthor was good, but he was very cross. But the people that isn't cross is the worst. There's no good in anny woman that isn't cross. Sure, you know yourself, my lady, the gerr'l that's cross, she's the good servant!'

" He looked to me, with his head on one side for assent. I assented.

" 'Well, as for the Owld Docthor,' he resumed, 'he was very cross, but afther he put that blast out of him he'd be very good. My own brother was

goin' into th' Excise, and he went to the Owld Docthor for a certifi-cat. Sure, didn't the Docthor give him back the sovereign! "You'll want it," says he, "for yer journey." There was an old lady here, and she was as cross as a diggle.' ('A diggle,' it may be noted, is a euphuism by which, to ears polite, the Prince of Darkness is indicated.) 'She'd go out to where the men 'd be working, and if she'd be displeased, she'd go round them with a stick. Faith she would. She'd put them in with a stick! But afther five minutes she'd be all right; afther she had that blast put out of her.'

"It gives a comfortable feeling that 'crossness' is of the nature of a gas-shell, and can be eliminated from the system in a single explosion."

Unfortunately the interview was interrupted here.

Dean Swift says somewhere that "Good manners is the art of making those people easy with whom we converse." Martin had a very special gift of encouraging people to talk to her. There was something magnetic about her, some power of sympathy and extraction combined. Together with this she had a singular gift of toleration for stupid people, even of enjoyment of stupidity, if sincerity, and a certain virtuous anxiety, accompanied it. She was wont to declare that the personal offices of a good and dull person were pleasing to her. The fumbling efforts, the laboured breathing of one endeavouring—let us say—to untie her veil; a man, for choice, frightened, but thoroughly well-intentioned and humble. This she enjoyed, repudiating the reproach of effeteness, which, in this connection, I have many times laid to her charge.

In dealing with Rickeen, however, allowances for stupidity (she called it simplicity) had not to be taken

into consideration. I have a letter from her, recounting another of her conversations with Rick, in which he discussed a "village tragedy" that occurred at Christmas time, a few years after she had returned to Ross. (The reference at the beginning of the letter is to the sudden death of an acquaintance.)

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross, January, 1894.)

"These sudden deaths are happy for the people who die them, but desperate for those who are left behind. Certainly it makes one feel that the thing to desire, beyond most heavenly things, is strength to face the dreadful thing that may be coming. For oneself, one could wish for the passion for death that was in a young fellow here. He disappeared on St. Stephen's Day [1] and they found him at last in the Wood of Annagh, in an awful pond that is on your left, just after you get into the wood—Poulleen-a-férla. They hooked him up from among the sunken branches of trees, and found him by getting a boat on to the pool and staring down in all lights. Finally they wrapped a big stone in a white flannel 'bauneen' and dropped it in. They were just able to see where it lay, and it placed things for them, so that they at last recognised some dim companion shadow as what they were searching for, and got it out. He was a very religious and steady young man, but his mind was weak, and it turns out that what chiefly preyed on it was that one day some people called him from his work and deluded him somehow into shortening up the chain of the chapel bell, in order that when the new priest came to hold Mass next Sunday, the bell could not be rung. (I have told you that Father Z. has been forbidden to officiate, and a new priest is coming.)

[1] December 26th.

" When this poor boy found out what he had done, he was miserable. He brooded over it and his people were alarmed, and watched him, more or less, but not enough. Never was a more bitter comment on a parish feud, and never was there a more innocent and godly life turned to active insanity by dastardly treatment. (The curs, who were afraid to meddle with the Chapel themselves !) "

Rickeen's discussion of the matter with Martin and one of the " Nursies " is interesting in showing the point of view of an intelligent peasant, a man who had been to America, and who was, though illiterate, of exceptionally sound and subtle judgment. I copy it from the notes that Martin sent to me.

" Rickeen and Nurse Davin and I were talking about the poor boy who is believed to have drowned himself. Rick took up his parable.

" ' Sure you remember of him ? Red Mike's son, back in Brahalish ? Him that used to be minding the hins for the Misthress ?

" ' Always and ever he was the same ; not a word o' talk out of him the longest year that ever came, only talkin' about God, and goin' to Mass, and very fond of the work. Sure they say the mother wouldn't let him to Mass this while back to Father X.' (N.B. This is the lawful priest. Father Z., his predecessor, was suspended by the Church, but many of the parish still side with him.) ' And Mortheen, the brother that's in Galway, got an account he was frettin' like, and he hired a car and took him to Galway to go to Mass there, and tellin' him no one 'd be denyin' him there. Faith, sorra Mass he'd go to in it ! They say before he left home, a whileen back, himself was back in the room, and the people was outside, talkin', and sayin' he should be sent to Ballinasloe ' (the Lunatic

Asylum) ' and sorra bit but when they looked round, himself was there, leshnin' to them! " What did I ever do to ye ? " says he, " And aren't ye damned fools," says he, walkin' over to them this way, " to think ye'll put me in it ! " says he. And sorra word more he spoke.

" ' The Lord save us ! They're lookin' for him now since Stephenses Day, and I'm sure 'tis in Poulleen-a-férla he is. He was down lookin' at it a while ago, and Stephenses Day they seen him runnin' down through Bullywawneen, and they're afther findin' his Scafflin and his Agnus Di[1] on a flagstone that's on the brink. Sure he took thim off him the ways he'd be dhrowned. No one could be dhrowned that had thim on him. Faith, he could not.

" ' Didn't ye hear talk of the man back in Malrour, that wint down to the lake last Sunday, and jumped into it to dhrown himself ? The people that seen him they ran, and they dhragged him out, an' he lyin' on his back, and the scafflin he got from the priest round his neck ; and it dhry ! God help the crature ! '

" (Nurse Davin, weeping, ' Amin ! Amin ! ')

" ' But sure what way can they find him in Poulleen-a-férla ? I know well there's thirty feet o' wather in it. Maybe they'd see him down through the wather to-day, it's that clear. God knows 'tis quare weather. The air's like it 'd be comin' up out o' the ground, and no breeze in it at all ! I'm thinkin' it's the weather as well as another that's puttin' the people asthray in their heads.'

" Rick paused here to take breath, and turned to Nurse Davin, who was peeling potatoes, and groaning at suitable intervals.

" ' Nurse, did ye ever hear tell o' puttin' a shave (sheaf) o' oats on the wather where ye'd think a

[1] Scapular and Agnus Dei.

pairson 'd be dhrowned, an' it 'll stand up whin it 'd be over the place where he's lyin' ? They have a shave beyant, but it's lyin' on the wather always. I wouldn't believe that at all.'

" Nurse Davin uttered a non-committal invocation of her favourite saint, but offered no opinion.

" ' Sure it was that that they coaxed him to do at the chapel that preyed on him entirely.'

" ' Lord ha' mercy on him ! ' said Nurse, wiping her eyes.

" ' When he knew then what he done,' Rick resumed, turning to me again, ' sorra Mass he'd ever go to again, and they knew by him he was watchin' his shance to make off. They follied him a few days back, when they seen him sneakin' off down through the wood, but sorra bit but he felt them afther him and he turned back.

" ' 'Twas on Stephenses Day he wint cuttin' a rope o' ferns with his brother, and faith when the brother was talkin' to a man that was in it, he shlipped away. The brother thought it was home he wint, till he got the rope o' ferns threwn afther him on the ground.

" ' An' that, now, was the time he got the shance.'

" Nurse Davin, who is the very salt of the earth, has felt it all very deeply. I cheered her by giving her your Christmas messages. She was overwhelmed with gratitude. ' And would ye be pleased to wish her every sort of good luck and happiness, and the blessing o' God on her ! The crature ! Indeed she was good, and clane, and quiet, and sensible ! And her little dog—so nice and so clever ! ' " (This was the Puppet.) " ' She cried afther him, the crature ! She could do no more.' "

I trust I may be pardoned for quoting this encomium. The virtues enumerated by Nurse Davin have not often been ascribed to me.

CHAPTER XVII

LETTERS FROM ROSS

TAKING the publication of "An Irish Cousin" as the beginning of our literary work, its next development was a series of short articles on Irish subjects that Martin wrote, single-handed, for the *World*.

The sap was beginning to run up; more and more things began with her to throw themselves, almost unconsciously, into phrases and forms. Her thoughts blossomed in the fit words, as the life in the tree breaks in leaves. Everything appealed to her in this new life at Ross, which was the old, and while she weeded the flower-beds in the garden, or painted doors in the house, or drove her mother for long miles on the outside car, she was meditating, and phrase-making, and formulating her impressions. These, presently, passing through her letters to me, as through a filter, developed into an article, which was primarily inspired by the death of one of the older retainers of Ross.

Mr. Edmund Yates then had the *World* at his feet, having created it not very many years before, and that he possessed the *flair* for good work was evident in the enthusiasm for her writing that, from the first, he did not attempt to conceal from Martin.

If, in things literary, the buyer would forget his traditional pose of saying "it is naught," and would

woo the thirsty, tremulous soul of the artist with appreciation, the bargain would not often work out to his disadvantage. Edmund Yates had the courage of his opinions, and the admiration that he was too generous to withhold more than counterbalanced the minuteness of the cheque that came from his cashier.

The first of these articles, "A Delegate of the National League," appeared in July, 1889, and was received by our friends with mingled emotions. It is my mature conviction that they were horrified by its want of levity. That "a Shocker" should preach, that "one of the girls" should discourse on what was respectfully summarised by a young lady of my acquaintance as "Deep subjects of Life and Death," was not quite what anyone enjoyed. Mrs. H. Ward's book, "Robert Elsmere," had just appeared; it was considered to be necessary to read it, and to talk intellectually about it, and it was found wearing that Martin should also be among the Prophets, and should write what one of her cousins called "Potted Carlyle." None the less, she followed up "The Delegate," in a month or two, with another article in the same vein, entitled "Cheops in Connemara." In some of her letters of this period she speaks of these articles.

"I weed the garden a good deal," she says, "and give meat to my household, and I got a sort of grip of the Education article to-day, and hope it may continue. But I am a fraud in the way of writing. I heap together descriptions, with a few carefully constructed moralities interspersed, and hide behind them, so that no one shall discern my ignorance and hesitation.

"I am ploughing along at an article, and have a most ponderous notion in my head for another about

the poor women of the West of Ireland, their lives, their training, their characters, all with a view as to whether they would be the better for having votes, or would give a better or worse vote than the men. I feel overwhelmed and inadequate. I think I write worse every time I try" (which was obviously absurd).

"Mama has had a most kind letter from Sir William Gregory. He has many literary friends and so has Augusta" (Lady Gregory), "and he says they will both do their best for The Shocker, and that he hopes his conscience will allow him to praise it with trumpets and shawms. Poor Mama required a little bucking up after the profound gloom in which she was plunged by a letter from her oldest ally, Mrs. X., saying she thought the 'Delegate' was 'high-flown and verbose'—'merely, of course, the faults of young writing,' says Mrs. X. Mama was absolutely staggered, and has gone about saying at intervals, 'Knee-buckles to a Highlander!' by which she means to express her glorious contempt for Mrs. X.'s opinion of the classics."

The "ponderous notion" of which she spoke eventually developed into an article which she called "In Sickness and in Health." It first appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and we reprinted it in "Some Irish Yesterdays." It is, I think, a very delightful example of a class of writing in which she seems to me to be unequalled.

"Erin, the tear and the smile in thine eye,"

is a line that is entirely applicable to her, and to her outlook on the ways of Ross and its people. She loved them and she laughed at them, and even though she could hold Ross at arm's length, to analyse, and to philosophise, and to make literature of it and of its

happenings, she took it back to her heart again, and forgave what she could not approve, for no better reason than that she loved it.

I am aware that the prosperity of a letter, as of a jest, often lies in the ear of him that hears, or reads. Nevertheless I propose here and now to give a few extracts from her Ross letters. None of them have any connection with each other, or with anything else in particular, and anyone who fears to find them irrelevant or frivolous may, like Francie Fitzpatrick (when she eluded Master Whitty) "give a defiant skip and pass on."

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross, 1895.)

"Nurse B. gave, yesterday, a fine example of using the feminine for animals to imply cunning.

"'Didn't a big rat walk in the lardher windy, and me lookin' at her this ways, through the door, an' she took a bit o' bacon to dhrag it with her. She was that long' (indicating as far as her elbow), 'an' not that high!' (measuring half her little finger). 'Faith, Bridgie dhrove her the way she came!'

"Bridgie is of undaunted courage, runs after rats to slay them, and fears 'neither God nor devil, like the Black Prosbitarians.' She is a Topsy, lies and steals and idles, and is as clever as she can be. Could you but see her with a pink bow in her cap, and creaking Sunday boots, and her flaming orange hair and red eyes you would not be the better of it. She is fifteen, and for some mysterious reason, unknown to myself, I like her. . . . I am working at an article, badly. I am very stupid, and not the least clever, except at mending blinds, and the pump. I am tired of turning away my eyes from iniquity that I cannot rectify, of trying to get the servants up in the morning, of many things, but let me be thankful,

I have had the kitchen whitewashed. I laugh foolishly when I think of the Herculaneum and Pompeii episode from which the cat and three kittens barely escaped with their lives. The cat, being in labour, selected as her refuge the old oven in the corner of the kitchen, a bricked cavern, warm, lofty, and secluded. There, among bottles, rags, and other concealments of Bridgie's, she nourished and brought up her young in great calm, till the day that Andy set to work at the kitchen chimney. No one knew that the old oven had a special flue of its own, and it was down this flue that the soot elected to come. I was fortunately pervading space that day, and came in time to see a dense black cloud issuing from the oven's mouth into the kitchen. I yelled to a vague assembly of Bridgets in the servants' hall, all of whom were sufficiently dirty to bear a little more without injury, and having rushed into the gloom they promptly slammed the door on the unfortunate family inside, on whom then rained without intermission, soot, bricks, and jackdaws' nests. Having with difficulty got the door open again, the party was disinterred, quite unhurt, but *black*, and more entirely mortified than anything you can imagine. For the rest of the day 'Jubilee' cleaned herself and her children in the coldest parts of the house, with ostentatious fury. She was offered the top turf-box on the back stairs, but instantly refused, and finally settled herself in a stone compartment of the wine-cellar; a top berth this time, you bet!"

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross, 1901.)

"We did not achieve church this morning without some difficulty. I went round to the yard after breakfast, to see that things were *en train*, and was informed by Rickeen that he had not fed the grey

pony, as he had found a weazel in the oats, 'and sure there's some kind of a pizen in thim.' Being unable to combat this statement, I desired that the pony should be given hay. This was done but at the last moment, just before she was being put into the shafts, she 'sthripped a shoe.' Mama's old pony, Killola, was again a little lame—nothing for it but the monster Daisy, browsing in the lawn with her foal. It was then 10.45. I had on a voile skirt of stupendous length, with a floating train, my best gloves and other Sunday trappings, none the less must I help Rick to harness Daisy. Then the trouble was to shut her foal into the barn. In the barn was already immured the donkey, filled with one fierce determination to flee over to the White Field, where was Darcy's donkey. I had to hold Daisy, and combat her maternal instincts, and endure her ceaseless shriekings; I also had to head off the donkey, which burst from the barn, with gallopings and capers, while Rickeen stuffed in the foal, who, like its mother, was shrieking at the top of its voice. I also was weak with laughing, as Rick's language, both English and Irish, was terrific, and the donkey very ridiculous. Rick finally flailed it into what he called 'the pig-shtyle,' with many fervent 'Hona-mig-a-dhiouls' (Rick always throws in 'mig,' for pure intensity and rhythm). Then—('musha, the Lord save thim that's in a hurry')—the harness had to be torn off the grey, in the loose box, 'for fear would she rub the collar agin the Major' (which is what he calls the manger). Then we pitched Mama on to the car and got off. Daisy, almost invisible under her buffalo mane, as usual went the pace, and we got in at the First Lesson, and all was well."

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross.)

"I had a long walk on Thursday in search of turf,

to burn with logs. A sunset, that was boiling up orange steam on to grey clouds, kept turning me round all the way to Esker. At the turn to Pribaun I heard a frightful ruction going on. Two men in a cart using awful language at the tops of their voices, and Pat Lydon, on the fence, giving it back to them, asserting with unnecessary invocations, that there was nothing he hated like 'thim liars.' The men drove on as I came up, still chewing the last mouthful of curses as they passed, and Pat came forward with his hat off and the sweetest smile.

"'What was all that about?' said I.

"'Oh, thim was just tellin' me the price o' pigs in Ochtherard yesterday.' (This in a tone of the barest interest.) 'And how's Mama? Divil a one in the counthry's gettin' fat, only Mama!' This was, of course, the highest compliment, and I recognised that I was expected to enquire no more into the matter of the price of pigs. He then advised me to go to Jimmy X. (the song-maker) for turf, and I found him at Esker, dreamily contemplating an immense and haggard-looking sow, on whom, no doubt, he was composing a sonnet. He assured me that he would sell Mama a rick of turf. I asked how much was in the rick.

"'Well, indeed Miss, of that matter I am quite ignorant, but Jimmy Darcy can value it—(stand in off the road for fear anyone would hear us!)' (Then in a decorous whisper) 'But him and me is not very great since he summonsed me little girl for pullin' grass in the Wood of Annagh ——'

"There followed much more, in a small and deprecating voice, which, when told to Jim Darcy, he laughed to scorn.

"'There's not a basket, no, nor a sod he doesn't know that's in that rick!'

"The end of it was that the two Jimmys wrangled

down in the Bog of Pullagh the greater part of the next day, and nothing more than that has been accomplished.

"Poor old Kitty has been in trouble. I have not time now to give you the particulars, but will only note her account of the singular effects of remorse upon her, as unfolded to me by her, subsequent to the interview between her and her accuser and Katie.

"'Faith the hair is dhroppin' out o' me head, and the skin rollin' off the soles o' me feet, with the frettin'. Whin I heard what Mrs. Currey said, I went back to that woman above, an' she in her bed. I dhragged her from the bed,' (sob) 'an' she shweatin,' (sob) 'an' I brought her down to Mrs. Currey at the Big House ——'

"I have been doctoring Honor Joyce up in Doone for some days. She has had agonising pain, which the poor creature bore like a Trojan. I asked her to describe it, and she said feebly,

"'I couldn't give ye any patthern of it indeed, but it's like in me side as a pairson 'd be polishin' a boot, and he with a brush in his hand.' Which was indeed enlightening. Such a house! One little room, with some boards nailed together for a bed, in which was hay with blankets over it; a goat was tethered a few feet away, and while I was putting the mustard-leaf on, there came suddenly, and apparently from the bed itself, 'a cry so jubilant, so strange,' that indicated that somewhere under the bed a hen had laid an egg.

"'God bless her!' says Honor, faintly.

"Next I heard a choking cough in the heart of the blankets. It was a sick boy, huddled in there with his mother—quite invisible—buried in the bedclothes, like a dog . . . A beautiful day yesterday, fine and clear throughout. To-day the storm stormeth

as usual, and the white mist people are rushing after each other across the lawn, sure sign of hopeless wet. Poor Michael (an old tenant) died on Thursday night —a very gallant, quiet end, conscious and calm. His daughter did not mean to say anything remarkable when she told me that he died 'as quiet, now as quiet as a little fish'; but those were her words. I went up there to see his old wife, and coming into a house black with people, was suddenly confronted with Michael's body, laid out in the kitchen. His son, three parts drunk, advanced and delivered a loud, horrible harangue on Michael and the Martin family. The people sat like owls, listening, and we retired into a room where were whisky bottles galore, and the cream of the company; men from Galway, respectably drunk, and magnificent in speech . . . The funeral yesterday to which I went (Michael was one of our oldest and most faithful friends) was only a shade less horrifying. At all events the pale, tranced face was hidden, and the living people looked less brutal without that terrific, purified presence ——"

One other picture, of about the same period, may be given, and in connection with these experiences two things may be remembered. That they happened more than twenty years ago; also, that among these people, primitive, and proud, tenacious of conventions, and faithful to their dead, a want of hospitality at a funeral implied a want of respect for the one who had left them.

Unfortunately, it has not even yet been learnt that hospitality is not necessarily synonymous with whisky.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross, 1895.)

"William L.'s wife died suddenly, having had a

dead baby, two days ago, and was buried yesterday, up at the Chapel on the Hill. I went to the back gate and walked with the funeral from there. It was an extraordinary scene. The people who had relations buried there, roared and howled on the graves, and round the grave where Mrs. L. was being buried, there was a perpetual whining and moaning, awfully like the tuning of fiddles in an orchestra. Drunken men staggered about; one or two smart relations from Galway flaunted to and fro in their best clothes, occasionally crossing themselves, and three keeners knelt together inside the inmost ring by the grave, with their hands locked, rocking, and crying into each other's hoods, three awful witches, telling each other the full horrors that the other people were not competent to understand. There was no priest, but Mrs. L.'s brother read a kind of Litany, very like ours, at top speed, and all the people answered. Every Saint in the calendar was called on to save her and to protect her, and there poor William stood, with his head down, and his hat over his eyes. It was impressive, very, and the view was so fresh and clean and delightful from that height. The thump of the clods and stones on the coffin was a sound that made one shudder, and all the people keened and cried at it. . . . There have been many enquiries for you since I came home. Rickeen thinks he never seen the like of a lady like you that would have 'that undherstandin' of a man's work; and didn't I see her put her hand to thim palings and lep over them! Faith I thought there was no ladies could be as soople as our own till I seen her. But indeed, the both o' yee proved very bad that yee didn't get marri'd, and all the places yee were in!' "

CHAPTER XVIII

"TOURS, IDLE TOURS"

THE adverse opinion of her old and once-trusted comrade, Mrs. X., in the matter of "The Delegate" was not the only trial of the kind that Mrs. Martin had to face. I imagine that few things in her life had given her as much pleasure as Violet's success as a writer. She had a very highly cultured taste, and her literary judgment, builded as it was upon the rock of the classics, was as sound as it was fastidious. Had a conflict been pressed between it and maternal pride, I believe the latter would have been worsted. Fortunately, her critical faculty permitted her to extend to Martin's writing the same entire approval that she bestowed upon her in all other regards. It is usual to make merry over a mother's glorying in her young, but there are few things more touching than to see a brilliant creature, whose own glories are past, renew her youth, and yet forget it, in the rising sun of a child's success.

No one expects to be a prophet in his own country, but when Martin and I first began to write, we have sometimes felt as if a mean might have been discovered between receiving our books with the trumpets and shawms, suggested by Sir William Gregory, and treating them as regrettable slips, over which a cloak of kindly silence was to be flung. My cousin Nannie

and—though in less degree—my mother, were both out for trumpets, and the silence of their acquaintances (a silence that Martin and I did not fail to assure them was compassionate) filled them with wrath that only each other's sympathy could assuage. (It is, I am sure, unnecessary to say that each was comfortingly aware that her own daughter had done all the work. But this did not invalidate the sympathy.)

The formula touching the superfluity of knee-buckles to the Highlander was, however, sustaining; and this was fortunate, as each of Martin's articles, as they appeared in the *World*, called it into requisition. If "The Delegate" had staggered the Highlanders, they literally reeled when "Cheops in Connemara" was offered for their learning by Mrs. Martin, who had a pathetic hope, never realised, that some day they might find grace and understanding.

It was of "Cheops" that a lady, who may be called Mrs. Brown, said to my cousin Nannie,

"Oh, Mrs. Martin, I *loved* it! It was so *nice!* I couldn't quite understand it, though I read it twice over, but I showed it to Mr. Brown, and *he* solved the problem!"

Wonderful man, as Martin commented when she wrote the story to me.

It was this same Mr. Brown whose criticism of the "Irish Cousin," wrung from him by Mrs. Martin, was so encouraging.

"I found it," he wrote, "highly imaginative, but not nonsensical, unusual in a work of legendary character. In fact, it is not bosh!"

The singular spring from the clouds to every day's most common slang was typical of good Mr. Brown. He is now beyond the clouds, or, in any case, is, I am sure, where he will not be offended if I recall one or two of his pulpit utterances. In my diary at this

time I find: "Interesting sermon. Mr. Brown told us that 'a sin, though very great, is not as great as one that exceeds it; but remember that sin can only find entrance in a heart prepared for it, even as matches strike only on the box. And oh friends, it is useless to trust in those whose names are fragrant in Christian society to pull you through.'"

Martin was much attached to Mr. Brown, who was as kind a man, and as worthy a parson, as ever was great-grandson to Mrs. Malaprop. In a letter to me she says:

"Last Sunday's sermon was full of 'jewels five words long.' I noticed first an allusion to Jacob's perfidy to Esau. 'Which of us, Beloved, would not have blushed if we had been in—in—in the shoes in which Jacob was then living? Or if we had been his mother?'

"There was something in this so suggestive of the tale of the Old Woman, who with her family, lived in a shoe, that I found my seat in the front row of the choir inconvenient, more especially when one recollected that in Jacob's time sandals were the usual wear. Mr. B. then proceeded to tell us of 'The Greek Chap' who held the gunwale of the boat and 'when his right hand was chopped off, held it with his left, and that being cut off, caught it in his teeth. Then his head was cut off! Think of him, Beloved, who, when his head was cut off, still with his teeth held the boat impossible!'

"The last word was doubtless the nearest he could get to 'immoveable.' At this two prominent members of the choir laughed, long and agonisingly, as did many others. I never smiled. Had you been there I might have been unequal to the strain, but I felt sorry for poor Mr. Brown, as it was only a slip to say 'head' for 'hand.' He got through the rest pretty well,

only saying, a little later, that we should not 'ask the Almighty for mercies to be doled out to us, like a pauper's gruel, in half-pints.' He gave us another striking metaphor, a few Sundays ago. 'Dear friends, to what shall I liken the Day of Resurrection, and the rising of us, miserable sinners, from the grave? Will it not be like poor, wretched, black chimney-sweeps, sticking their heads up out of chimneys!'"

Martin's pitifulness to incapacity, whether mental or physical, could be almost exasperating sometimes in its wide charity. Failure of any kind appealed to her generosity. Her consideration and tenderness for the limitations and disabilities of old age were very wonderful and beautiful things, and no one ever knew her to triumph over a fallen foe. For myself, I am of opinion that, with some foes, this is a mistake, akin to being heroic at a dentist's. However, the question need not now be discussed.

That "An Irish Cousin" had satisfied Messrs. Bentley's expectations was evidenced by a letter from Mr. R. Bentley in October, 1889, in which he suggested that we should write a three-volume novel for them, and offered us £100 down and £125 on the second 500 copies. We were then at work on a short novel that we had been commissioned to write. This was "Naboth's Vineyard," which, after various adventures, was first published by Spencer Blackett, in October, 1891. The story had had a preliminary canter in the *Lady's Pictorial* Christmas number as a short story, which we called "Slide Number 42." It was sufficiently approved of to encourage us to fill it up and make a novel of it. As a book it has had a curious career. We had sold the copyright without reservation, and presently it was passed on to Mr. Blackett. We next heard of it in the hands of Griffith and Farran. Then it appeared as a "yellow-back"

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at 2*s*. Tauchnitz then produced it; finally, not very long ago, a friend sent us a copy, bound rather like a manual of devotion, with silver edges to the pages, which she had bought, new, for 4*d*.; which makes one fear that Ahab's venture had not turned out too well. It was a story of the Land League, and the actors in it were all of the peasant class. It was very well reviewed, and was, in fact, treated by the Olympians, the *Spectator*, the *Saturday Review*, the *Times*, etc., with a respect and a seriousness that almost alarmed us. It seemed that we had been talking prose without knowing it, and we were so gratified by the discovery that we decided forthwith to abandon all distractions and plunge solemnly, and with single-hearted industry, into the construction of the three-volume novel desired by Messrs. Bentley.

This was not, however, as simple a matter as it seemed, and the way was far from clear. I was doing illustrations for a children's story (and a very delightful one), "Clear as the Noonday," by my cousin, Mrs. James Penrose, and I was also illustrating an old Irish song of Crimean times, "The Kerry Recruit," which has been more attractively brought to the notice of the public by another cousin, Mr. Harry Plunket Greene. Martin was still enmeshed in her *World* articles and in Ross affairs generally, and though we discussed the "serious novel" intermittently it did not advance.

Ross was by this time restored to the normal condition of Irish country houses, comfortable, hospitable, unconventional, an altogether pleasant place to be in, and with visitors coming and going, it was not as easy as it had been for the daughter in residence to devote herself to literature, especially serious literature.

During one of my many visits there, the honourable

and unsolicited office of domestic chaplain had been conferred upon me. Martin has written that "Hymns and Family Prayers are often receptacles for stale metaphor and loose phraseology; out of them comes a religion clothed to suffocation in Sunday clothes and smelling of pew-openers. Tate and Brady had much to answer for in this respect; some of their verses give at once the peculiar feeling of stiff neck produced by a dull sermon and a high pew."

In this condemnation, however, the family prayers at Ross were not included. When I knew them they took the form of selections from the Morning Service, and included the Psalms for the day; nothing more simple and suitable could be imagined; nevertheless, there were times when they might, indisputably, have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. I have already alluded to my cousin Nannie's sense of humour, and its power of overwhelming her in sudden catastrophe. On some forgotten occasion, one of those *contretemps* peculiar to the moment of household devotion had taken place, and the remembrance of this, recurring, as it did, daily, with the opening of the Prayer-book, rarely failed to render impossible for her a decorous reading of the prayers. This was the more disastrous, because, like very many of "The Chief's" descendants, she specially enjoyed reading aloud. With much reluctance she deputed her office to Martin, but, unhappily, some aspect of the affair (which had, it may be admitted, some that were sufficiently absurd) would tickle the deputy, and prayers at Ross, which, as I have said, included the Psalms for the day, ended, more than once, at very short notice. I may say that during my tenure of the office, although I could not, like Martin, repeat all the Psalms from memory, I acquitted myself

respectably, if quite without distinction. This, as far as I know, has been achieved by but one reader, who will, I trust, forgive me if I abandon, for once, the effort to refrain from mention of existing contemporaries, and quote Martin's account of her success.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Ross, 1890.)

"None of us were able to go to church to-day, the weather being detestable and Mama's eyes much inflamed by gout. So we had prayers at home. Quite early in the morning Mama had strong convulsions at the very thought, and I compelled her to delegate Katie for the office of chaplain. Muriel and her English nurse, Hoskins, were summoned, and before they came Mama stipulated that the Psalms should be read. Katie consented, on condition that Mama should not try to read her verse, and after some resistance, Mama gave in. In came Hoskins, looking the picture of propriety, with a crimson nose, and Muriel, armed with a Child's Bible, and Katie made a start. Will you believe that Mama could not refrain, but nipped in with the second verse, in a voice of the most majestic gravity. The fourth verse was her next, and in that I detected effort, and prepared for the worst. At the sixth came collapse, and a stifled anguish of laughter. I said in tones of ice,

"'I'm afraid your eye is hurting you?'

"'Yes,' gasped Mama.

"Katie swept on without a stagger, and thus the situation was saved. I think Hoskins would consider laughter of the kind so incredible that she would more easily believe that Mama always did this when her eye hurt her. Katie slew Mama, hip and thigh, afterwards, as indeed, her magnificent handling of the affair entitled her to do."

In spite of our excellent resolutions, the serious novel was again put on the shelf, and the next work we undertook was a tour on behalf of the *Lady's Pictorial*. This was provoked by a guide-book to Connemara, which was sent to Martin by an English friend. She wrote to me and said, "E. H. has sent me an intolerably vulgar guide to Connemara, and suggests that you and I should try and do something to take its place. It is written as it were in description of a tour made by an ingenuous family party. 'Jack,' very manly; the Young Ladies, very ladylike; a kind and humorous mother, etc. 'Jack' is much the most revolting. The informant of the party gives many interesting facts about the disappearance of the Martins from the face of the earth, and deplores the breaking up of the property '*put together by Cromwell's soldier*'!"

I think it was this culminating offence that decided us to supplement the information supplied to the ingenuous family. Our examination into the conditions of Connemara, and our findings on its scenery, hotels, roads, etc., were not accomplished without considerable effort. In 1890 there was no railway to Clifden, hotels were few and indifferent, means of communication scant and expensive. We hired a jennet and a governess-cart, and strayed among the mountains like tinkers, stopping where we must, taking chances for bed and board. It was uncomfortable and enjoyable, and I imagine that our account of it, which was published as a book by Messrs. W. H. Allen, is still consulted by the tourist who does not require either mental improvement or reliable statistics.

In the autumn of '91 we went, by arrangement with the *Lady's Pictorial*, to Bordeaux, to investigate, and to give our valuable views upon the vintage in

that district. This developed into a very interesting expedition; we had introductions that opened to us the gloomy and historic portals of the principal "*Caves*"; we saw claret in all its stages (some of them horrible); we assisted at a "*Danse de Vendange*," a sort of Harvest Home, at which we trod strange measures with the vintagers, feeling, as we swung and sprang to the squeals of pipes and fiddles, as though we were in comic opera; we gained a pleasing insight into the charm of French hospitality, and we acquired—and this was the tour's only drawback—a taste for the very best claret that we have since found unfortunately superfluous.

These articles, also, were republished with the title "In the Vine Country," Martin's suggestion of "From Cork to Claret" being rejected as too subtle for the public. Such, at least, was the publishers' opinion, which is often pessimistic as to the intelligence of the public.

Since I am on the subject of our tours, I may as well deal with them all. It was in June, 1893, that we rode through Wales, at the behest of *Black and White*. The articles, with my drawings, were subsequently published by Messrs. Blackwood, and were entitled "Beggars on Horseback." We were a little more than a week on the road, and were mounted on hireling ponies and hireling saddles (facts that may enlist the sympathies of those who have a knowledge of such matters). I may here admit that, in spite of certain obvious advantages of a literary kind, these amateur-gipsy tours are not altogether as enjoyable as our accounts of them might lead the artless reader to imagine. They demand iron endurance, the temper of Mark Tapley, and the Will to Survive of Robinson Crusoe. I do not say that we possessed these attributes, but we realised their necessity.

Only once more, and in this same year, 1893, did we adventure on a tour. This time again on behalf of the *Lady's Pictorial*, and, at our own suggestion, to Denmark. We had offered the Editor four alternatives, Lapland or Denmark, Killarney or Kiel. He chose Denmark, and I have, ever since 1914, deeply regretted that we did not insist on Kiel.

The artistic and social difficulties in dealing with this class of work have not, in my experience, been sufficiently set forth. We were provided with introductions, obtained variously, mainly through our own friends. We were given, editorially, to understand that the events, be they what they may, were ever to be treated from the humorous point of view. "Pleasant" is the word employed, which means pleasant for the pampered reader, but not necessarily for anyone else.

Well, "pleasant" things, resulting from some of these kind, private introductions, undoubtedly occurred, but it is a poor return for full-handed hospitality to swing its bones, as on a gibbet, in a newspaper. Many have been the priceless occurrences that we have had to bury in our own bosoms, or, in writing them down, write ourselves down also as dastards. It is some consolation to be able to say this here and now. For all I know, there may still be those who consider that Martin Ross and E. Œ. Somerville treated them, either by omission or commission, with ingratitude. If so, let me now assure them that they little know how they were spared.

CHAPTER XIX

OF DOGS

THROUGHOUT these very discursive annals I have tried to keep in remembrance a lesson that I learnt a few years ago from a very interesting book of Mr. Seton Thompson's called, I think, "In the Arctic Prairies." In it he began by saying that travellers' accounts of their sufferings from mosquitoes were liable to degenerate into a weariness to the reader; therefore he determined to mass all he had suffered into one chapter. Thenceforward, when the remembrance of the mosquitoes became too poignant for endurance, a pause came in the narrative, and a footnote said (with an audible groan), "See Chapter So and So." Thus it has been with me and dogs. This is Chapter So and So, and I honourably invite the Skip of Defiance already several times advocated.

M. Maeterlinck has written of dogs with deep discernment, yet not, I think, in quite the right spirit. No dogs, save perhaps hounds, should speak of "Master," or "Mistress." The relationship should be as that of a parent; at farthest, that of a fond governess. R. L. Stevenson's essay, "The Character of Dogs," treats of dogs with all his enchanting perception and subtlety, and contains the matchless phrase "That mass of carneying affectations, the

female dog"; yet memorable as the phrase is, I would venture to protest against the assumption that is implicit in it, namely, that affectation is a thing to be reprobated. Martin's and my opinion has ever been that it is one of the most bewitching of qualities. I believe I rather enjoy it in young ladies; I adore it in "the female dog." But it must be genuine affectation. The hauteur of a fox terrier lady with a stranger cad-dog is made infinitely more precious by the certainty that when the Parent's eye is removed, it will immediately become transmuted into the most unbridled familiarity.

I recall a sunny summer morning when, on the lawn tennis ground at Drishane, Martin and I received a visit from the then parson of the parish, and from his large black retriever. Candy and Sheila, my fox terriers, ladies both, received it also, but in their case, with a dignity that we could not hope to emulate. Shortly after the interview opened, chancing to look round, I beheld two motionless round white mounds, hedgehog in attitude, super-hedgehog in sentiment, buried in profoundest slumber. Round the mounds, with faint yelps, in brief rushes, panting with adoration, with long pink tongue flapping, and white teeth flashing, fore-legs wide apart and flung flat on the grass, went the parson's retriever. With sealed eyes the ladies slept on. Yet, when Martin and the parson and I had strayed on into the flower garden, I cannot conceal the fact that both the Clara Vere de Veres abandoned themselves to a Maenad activity that took the amazed and deeply gratified retriever as its focal point, and might have given effective hints to any impersonator of Salome dancing before King Herod.

I have ever been faithful to two breeds, foxhounds, and fox terriers, and, as I look back over a long series

of *Grandes Passions*, I see Ranger and Rachel and Science, with their faithful, beautiful hound-faces, waving their sterns to me through the mists of memory, and The Puppet, and Dot, and, paramount among them all, the little "Head-dog," Candy, all waiting in the past, to be remembered and praised, and petted. Mention has already been made of The Puppet's brief but brilliant life. Martin has summed him up as "an engaging but ill-mannered little thing," but this dispassionate assessment did not interfere with her affection for him. Some time after his early and tragic death, she sent me a little MS. book entitled "Passages in the Life of a Puppet, By its Mother, Being some Extracts from Her Correspondence." These, with her comments, elucidatory and otherwise, I still preserve, and they are often both entertaining and instructive. They are, on the whole, of too esoteric a nature for these pages, but I may offer one extract that may be regarded as not unsuitable by that influential person, "the general reader." This treats of The Puppet in the capacity of parent, and is endorsed by Martin, "The Puppet in his own Home Circle is unamiable, and is much disliked by his wife."

"His attitude is one of curiosity and suspicion. When I go to see Dot and the puppies, he creeps after me, walking with the most exaggerated caution on three legs, one being held high in air, in the pose of one who says 'Hark!' or 'Hist!' Sometimes he forgets, and says it with a hind-leg, but there are never more than three paws on the ground. Meantime, the Mamma, with meek, beaming eyes fixed on me, keeps up a low and thunderous growl. At other times, he scrutinises the family from a distance, severely, sitting erect, like one of Landseer's lions (but the pose is grander), with ears inside out, as cleared for

action. I dither—— " The extract ends thus, with some abruptness, and recognising the truth of the final statement, I will leave the Puppet and his Passages, with an apology for having alluded to them. We have, sometimes, thought of writing a dog-novel (being attracted by the thought of calling it " Kennelworth "), but we were forced to recognise that society is not yet ripe for it.

In fact, the position of dogs requires readjustment. It is marked by immoderation. To declaim that dogs should be kept in their Proper Place, is merely to invite to battle. One thing I will say as touching the case of dogs whose " proper place " has been, as with myself, the bosoms of their respective owners. There comes to those owners something catastrophic, a death or a disaster, or even some such household throe as a wedding or a ball. The dogs are forgotten. The belief that has been fostered in them of their own importance remains unshaken. Their intelligent consciousness of individual life is as intense as ever. Even if the amazing stories of dog-intelligence, that were heard a few years ago, were untrue, it is impossible to deny to dogs whose minds have been humanised a share of comprehension that is practically human. Yet, when the Big Moment comes in the life of the house, the dogs are brushed aside and ignored. One is sometimes dimly, remotely aware, through one's own misery or pre-occupation, of the lonely, bewildered little fellow-being who has suddenly become insignificant, but that is all. One gives him to eat and drink, but one has withdrawn one's soul from him, and he knows it, and wonders why, and suffers. It is inevitable, but, like many an inevitable thing, it is not fair.

After Dot, in the succession of fox terriers, came Musk, who was unto Dot as a daughter, so much so,

indeed, that I find it said in my diary that Dot, like the Abbess in the Ballad of the Nun,

> " —— loved her more and more,
> And as a mark of perfect trust
> Made her the Keeper of the Ashpit."

Musk belonged, strictly speaking, to my sister; her name, through modifications that might interest an etymologist, but no one else, became more usually, Muck, or Pucket. As the Pucket she reigned for many years jointly with her eldest daughter, Candy, and with a later daughter, Sheila, on the steps of the throne. The Pucket had a singular fear of anyone who approached her without speaking. If, on a return after the briefest absence, the friend, or even the Mother, received her welcoming barks in silence, yet continued to advance towards her—about which there may be conceded to be something fateful—the Pucket's voice would falter, she would retreat with ever increasing speed, and I have seen her, when further retirement was impossible, plunge herself into a bush and thence cry for help. One of her daughters will sometimes act in this way, and I have known other dogs to behave similarly. On what, then, does their apprehension of their friends rely? Not sight, nor smell; not voice, as a deaf dog recognises his friends? I can only suppose that the unwonted lack of response suggests a mental overthrow, and that Musk felt that nothing less than the failure of their reason would silence her Mother or her Aunt.

On another occasion, and a more legitimate one, I have seen Musk's self-control overthrown. An elderly lady-guest, now dead, whose name and demeanour equally suggested the sobriquet of " The Bedlamite," undertook one evening to sing for us. Musk, in common with all our dogs, was inured to, practically,

any form of music, but when the Bedlamite advanced with a concertina to the middle of the drawing-room, and, with Nautch-like wavings of the instrument, began to shriek—there is no other word—Salaman's entirely beautiful setting of "I arise from dreams of thee," to the sole accompaniment of the concertina's shrill wheezings, the Pucket, after some cautious and horrified attention, retired stealthily under the table, and uttered low and windy howls.

But there are so many points in connection with which, as it must seem to dogs, our behaviour is inscrutable. One may take the case of baths, which must daily mystify them. As I put forth to the bath-room, I can nearly always recognise in my dogs some artificiality of manner, an assumption of indifference, that they are far from feeling. They regard me with bright, wary eyes, and remain in their baskets, still as birds on eggs. "She goes," they say, "to that revolting and unnecessary torture, known as Washy-washy. Why she inflicts it upon herself is known to Heaven alone. For our part, let us keep perfectly quiet, nor tempt the incalculable impulses that rule her in these matters."

I have never been addicted to dachshunds, but I must make mention of one, Koko; incomparable as a lady of fashion, as a fag at lawn tennis, and as a thief. She also had a gift, not without its uses, of biting beggars. Her owner, my cousin Doctor Violet Coghill, who was in Koko's time a medical student, had a practice in dogbites more extended than even her enthusiasm desired. Once, when a patient came to be dressed and compensated, Koko was collared, chained, and, to make assurance doubly sure, tucked under the doctor's left arm. Thence, during the inspection of the wound, she stretched a neck like a snake, and bit the patient again. No dinner-table

was safe from her depredations. "Koko is around the coasts!" parlourmaids have been heard to cry, flying to their dining-rooms, as merchant-brigs might fly to harbour upon a rumour of Paul Jones. She and another, my sister's Max, were the first dachshunds in Carbery. I have heard Max discussed by little boys in Skibbereen.

"'Tis a daag!"

"'Tis not!"

"'Tis!"

"'Tis not! 'Tis a Sarpint!"

Another and more sophisticated critic decided that it was "a little running sofa." But this was intentionally facetious; the serpent theory expressed a genuine conviction.

It was at one time said of my family, generally, that we were kept by a few dogs for their convenience and entertainment, and later there was a period when amongst ourselves and our cousins we could muster about fourteen, in variety, mainly small dogs. We decided to have a drag-hunt, and in order to ensure some measure of success—(I ask all serious Hound-men to turn away their eyes from beholding iniquity)—I desired my huntsman, an orderly-minded Englishman, to bring Rachel and Admiral to run the drag.

"Oh, Master, you wouldn't ask them pore 'ounds to do such a thing?" said G.

I said I would; that they were old, and steady; in short, I apologised, but was firm.

G. asked coldly if a couple would be enough.

I said quite enough, adding that all the ladies' and gentlemen's dogs were coming.

G. said, "Oh, them cur-dogs ——"

He then asked, with resignation, the hour of "the meet," and retired.

At the appointed time he was there, with Rachel

and Admiral, and two other couples, his principles having succumbed to the temptation of a hunt in June. The fourteen cur-dogs, ranging from griffons, through fox terriers and spaniels, to a deerhound, were there too, with a suitable number of proprietors, and the hare having been given a fair start, the pack was laid on. The run began badly, as the smallest dogs, believing the time had come to indulge their long-nourished detestation of the hounds, flung themselves upon the blameless Rachel and her party, who, for some distance, conscientiously ran the line, with cur-dogs hanging like earrings from their ears. Neither was the hare immune from difficulties. His course had been plotted to pass that old graveyard at Castle Haven whereof mention has been made, and when he arrived at it he found a funeral in progress. He lifted the drag, and tried to conceal his true character. In vain. When he had passed, and he ventured to become once more a hare, he found that there was not a man of the funeral who was not hanging over the graveyard wall, absorbed in the progress of the chase. This had been arranged to conclude at the kennels, and Candy and I, having been skirters throughout, waited at a suitable point to see the finish. First came the hare, very purple in the face, but still uncaught and undefeated, the paraffined remains of the rabbit still bouncing zealously after him. Then I heard the single, recurring note of a hound, and presently Rachel came into view at a leisurely trot; as she passed me, she smiled apologetically—she had a pretty smile that showed her front teeth—and waved her stern. I understood her to say that it was all rot, but she was going through with it. After Rachel, nothing. I was high on the hill-side above the kennels, and I heard a vague row on the road below, from which I gathered that the

game had palled on the rest of the pursuers, and they were going home for tea.

I have loved many dogs. All of them have had "bits of my heart to tear," and have torn it, but of them all, Candy comes first, and will remain so. "Wee Candy is just *fear*fully neat!" as her faithful friend, Madge Robertson, used to say, with the whole-hearted enthusiasm of a Highlander. Candy was a very small smooth fox terrier, eldest daughter of Muck, with a forehead as high and as full as that of the Chinese God of Wisdom, and eyes that had a more profound and burning soul in them than I have seen in the eyes of any other living thing. I pass over her nose in silence. Her figure was perfection, and her complexion, snow, with one autumn leaf veiling her right eye.

She danced at tea-parties, whirling in a gauze frock, and an Early Victorian straw bonnet trimmed with rosebuds. In this attire she would walk, or rather trip, elegantly, from end to end of a table, appraising what was thereon, and deciding by which cake to take up her position. To see her say her grace, with her little bonneted head in her paws, on her Mother's knee, had power to make right-minded persons weep (even as one of my sisters-in-law has been seen to shed tears, when, from the top of an omnibus, she chanced to behold her eldest son, walking in boredom, yet in unflawed goodness, with his nurse).

She was the little dog who set the fashion to all her fellows, and her rules were of iron. Chief among these, was, as St. Paul might have said, to abstain from affectionate licking. This, she held, was underbred, and never done by the best dogs. She had a wounding way of carefully sniffing the face or the fingers, and then turning aside; but on some few and high occasions the ordinance has been infringed. Above

and beyond all others of her race she had the power of expressing herself. It was she who organised and headed the Reception Committees that welcomed my return after absence, and I have often been told how, when my return was announced to her, she would assemble herself and her comrades in a position that commanded the point of arrival, and would lead the first public salutations and reproaches for past neglect; and, these suitably and histrionically accomplished, no other little dog could disclose so deep yet decorous an ecstasy, her face hidden in my neck, while she uttered faint and tiny groans of love. Portraits, and, still less, photographs, convey little or nothing to most dogs, but I have seen Candy stiffen up and gaze fixedly at a snapshot of a bull-terrier (very white on a dark background) that chanced to be on a level with her eyes, uttering the while small and bead-like growls.

Her unusual brain power was paid for by overstrung nerves, and any loud and sudden sound had power to terrify her. She nearly died from what would now be called shock, after a few hours spent in the inferno of Glasgow streets, in the course of a journey which she and I made to the Highlands. We were going to the Island of Mull, and there we enjoyed ourselves as, I think, only the guests of Highland hosts and hostesses can. Candy, as was invariably the case, immediately took precedence of all other beings.

"Jeanie," said the Laird to his sister, "you've let the fire out."

Jeanie, in whose lap Candy was embedded, replied, "I couldn't help it, Duncan. Candy dislikes so intensely the noise of putting on coal."

The Laird admitted the explanation.

Much remains to be desired in travelling facilities on steamers, but in nothing more than in provision

"CANDY." V. F. M.

E. Œ. S. AND A DILETTANTE. V. F. M.

for dogs and children; a *crèche* in which to immure children and those doomed to attend them, a suitably arranged receptacle in each cabin for the passenger's dog. On a certain cross-Channel route, between Ireland and England, I had, before the War, established myself and my dogs on a sound basis. The dear Stewardess, with whom this was arranged, is now dead, so without injury to her I can reveal the relations between us. You must picture me as lurking, with two small white dogs in a leash, in some obscure spot beneath the bridge. I have secured a cabin, and during the confusion prior to getting under way I rush into it with the dogs. I then establish them in a rug under a seat. The Stewardess enters—we converse affably. (One of these many journeys took place on the same day that Queen Victoria crossed the Irish Sea to pay her last visit to Ireland. I mentioned the fact to the Stewardess. "Why, then, I hope she'll have a good crossing, the poor gerr'l!" replied the Stewardess, benignantly.)

To return to the dogs. They, being well trained, have instantly composed themselves for sleep. The Stewardess, equally well trained, ignores them, only, when leaving the cabin, saying firmly, "Now, I don't see them dogs. I never seen them at all."

Then she leaves. Later, the vessel having started, and I having retired to my berth, the door is softly opened. In the darkness I hear the Stewardess's voice hiss, in the thinnest of whispers, "Have ye their tickets?" I reply in equally gnat-like tones, "I have!" "I'll take them, so," she replies. And all is well.

It was this same Stewardess, in the course of my first crossing with her, of whom I wrote to Martin as follows. The subject is not strictly within the scope

of this chapter, but, as may have been observed, I have absolved myself from limitations such as this.

E. Œ. S. to V. F. M. (May, 1890.)

"The Stewardess, in the course of much friendly converse, said, 'Well, and I suppose ye're coming back from school, now?'

"I concealed my deep gratification at the supposition, and said 'No—that I was done with school for some time.' 'Well then, I suppose you are too'—(clearly thinking I was offended at the inference)—'I suppose you're too big now to be going to school!'

"Then I said I had never gone to school; whereat she put her helm hard down, and began to abuse school-girls with much heartiness, and said they gave more trouble than any other passengers.

"'Indeed, they're great imps,' she said.

"I, clearly, am that woman whom you have so often and so consistently abused, to whom Stewardesses talk—(all night, by the light of a sickeningly swinging colza-oil lamp)."

A friend of mine once said to this admirable woman that she proposed to bring her dog to England, and quoted the precedent of my dogs as to cabin privileges.

"Is it Miss Somerville?" said the Stewardess, in a voice weary with the satiety of a foregone conclusion. "Sure, she has nests of them!"

CHAPTER XX

"THE REAL CHARLOTTE."

"THE Real Charlotte" can claim resemblance with Homer in one peculiarity at least, that of a plurality of birthplaces. She was first born at Ross, in November, 1889, and achieved as much life as there may be in a skeleton scenario. She then expired, untimely. Her next avatar was at Drishane, when, in April, 1890, we wrote with enthusiasm the first chapter, and having done so, straightway put her on a shelf, and she died again. In the following November we did five more chapters, and established in our own minds the identity of the characters. Thenceforward those unattractive beings, Charlotte Mullen, Roddy Lambert, The Turkey-Hen, entered like the plague of frogs into our kneading-troughs, our wash-tubs, our bedchambers. With them came Hawkins, Christopher, and others, but with a less persistence. But of them all, and, I think, of all the company of more or less tangible shadows who have been fated to declare themselves by our pens, it is Francie Fitzpatrick who was our most constant companion, and she was the one of them all who "had the sway." We knew her best; we were fondest of her. Martin began by knowing her better than I did, but, even during the period when she sat on the shelf with her fellows, while Martin and I boiled the pot with short

stories and the like (that are now *réchauffé* in "All on the Irish Shore"), or wrote up tours, or frankly idled, Francie was taking a hand in what we did, and her point of view was in our minds.

Very often have we been accused of wresting to our vile purposes the friends and acquaintances among whom we have lived and moved and had our being. If I am to be believed in anything, I may be believed in this that I now say. Of all the people of whom we have written, three only have had any direct prototype in life. One was "Slipper," another was "Maria," both of whom are in "Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.," and the other was the Real Charlotte. Slipper's identity is negligible. So is Maria's. She who inspired Charlotte had left this world before we began to write books, and had left, unhappy woman, so few friends, if any, that in trying to embody some of her aspects in Charlotte Mullen, Martin and I felt we were breaking no law of courtesy or of honour.

One very strange fact in connection with Charlotte I may here record. Some time after the book had been published, an old lady who had known her in the flesh met us, and said—(please try to realise the godliest and most esoteric of County Cork accents)—

"And tell me, how in the worr'ld did you know about Charlotte's" (I may call her Charlotte) "love-affair?"

We said we had never known of such. That it had developed itself out of the story; in fact, that we had no idea that anything of the kind was possible.

"Well, 'tis *pairfectly* true!" replied the old lady, intensely.

And so indeed it was, as was then expounded to us. In almost every detail of Charlotte's relations with Lambert and his wife; incredibly, even appallingly true. And we then remembered how, while we were

still writing the book, a communication had come to my sister, purporting to be from the Real Charlotte, in some sphere other than this. A message of such hatred as inevitably suggested the words, "Hell holds no fury like a woman scorned."

These are things beyond and above our comprehension; it is trying the poor old scapegoat of Coincidence very high if it is to be pressed into the service of a case as complicated, and elaborate, and identical in detail as was this one.

"The Real Charlotte" went with us through the years '90 and '91, and was finished during the early summer of '92. There is an entry in my diary. "June 8, 1892. Wrote feverishly. The most agitating scenes of Charlotte. Finished Francie."

We felt her death very much. We had sat out on the cliffs, in heavenly May weather, with Poul Ghurrum, the Blue Hole, at our feet, and the great wall of Drishane Side rising sheer behind us, blazing with yellow furze blossom, just flecked here and there with the reticent silver of blackthorn. The time of the "Scoriveen," the Blackthorn winter, that last flick of the lash of the east wind, that comes so often early in May, was past. We and the dogs had achieved as much freedom from social and household offices as gave us the mornings, pure and wide, and unmolested. There is a place in the orchard at Drishane that is bound up with those final chapters, when we began to know that there could be but one fate for Francie. It felt like killing a wild bird that had trusted itself to you.

We have often been reviled for that, as for many other incidents in "The Real Charlotte," but I still think we were right.

Although the book was practically finished in June, the delays and interruptions that had followed it from

the first pursued it still. It was still in the roughest and most bewildering of manuscript, and its recopying involved us, as has been invariably our fate, in many alterations and additions. Interspersed with this work were short stories, visits, hunting, occasional articles called for by some casual paper or magazine. It was not until February 4, 1893, that we " actually and entirely finished off the Welsh Aunt, alias 'The Real Charlotte,' and sent her off. Poor old thing."

But even then there was no rest for the sole of her foot. Bentley offered £100, neither more nor less. Our diaries remark, " wrote breathing forth fire and and fury, and refused." In March I find that the day after I had " ridden a hunt on a drunk pony," " Bentley returned the MS." I think the excitement of the hunt on that unusual mount took the sting out of Charlotte's reverse. In April, " Smith and Elder curtly refused the Real C. They said their reader, Mr. James Payn, was ill. Can his illness have been the result of reading Charlotte ? Or was it anticipatory ? " Martin was at this time in Dublin, a sojourn thus summarised in her diary: " Dublin filled with dull, dirty, middle-aged women. Had my hair done in enormous bundle at back. Hideous but compulsory." I joined her there and we proceeded to London and saw and heard many cheerful things. (Amongst other items in my diary, I find " Heard Mr. Haweis preach a good sermon on Judas Iscariot, with faint but pleasant suggestion of a parallel between him and Mr. Gladstone.") We then opened negotiations with Messrs. Ward and Downey, and pending their completion, Martin and I, with my mother and my sister, paid our first visit to Oxford.

The affair opened badly. Our luggage had been early entrusted to a porter, to be deposited in the cloak-room, and the porter was trysted to meet us at

a certain hour and place. At the time appointed the porter was not. Our luggage eyed us coldly across the barrier, and, the recognition being one-sided, and unsupported by tickets, remained there, while we searched for the porter and the tickets (for which he had paid). He never transpired, and his fate remains a Mystery of the Great Western. By what is known in an Irish Petty Sessions Court as "hard swearing," we obtained possession of our property, but not before my mother had (*vide* my diary) "gone foaming to Oxford" without either her ducats or her daughters, coerced by the necessity of propitiating our host, a Don of Magdalen, with whom it seemed unwise to trifle.

Those days at Oxford are written in our memories in red letters, even though a party more bent on triviality and foolishness has not often disgraced the hospitality of a Scholar. He does not, I fear, forget how, after patient and learned exposition and exhibition of many colleges, one asked him, in genuine, even painstaking, ignorance, to remind her which of them had been "Waddle College"; and how he was only able to recall it to the inquirer's memory by the mention of a certain little white dog that was sitting at the entrance gate. Nor how, when taken to the roof of the Bodleian, to be shown the surrounding glories of Oxford, the sight of one of the ventilators of its reading-room had evoked in Martin Ross an uncontrollable longing to shriek down it, in imitation of a dog whose tail has been jammed in a door. (An incomparable gift of hers, that has made the fortune of many a dull dinner-party.) I have often wondered what the grave students in that home of learning thought of the unearthly cry from the heavens, Sirius, as it were, in mortal agony. We were not permitted to wait for a sequel. Our host, with blanched face, hurried us away.

"These be toys," but they were pleasant, and one more recollection of that time may be permitted. It was April 30th, and on May morning, as all properly instructed persons know, the choristers of Magdalen salute the rising sun from the top of Magdalen Tower. Our host, the Don, being a man having authority, determined that we were to view this ceremony; and being also a man of intelligence, decided that one of his menials should for the occasion take his office of guide and protector. Accordingly, at some four of the clock, a faithful undergraduate threw small stones at our windows in the Mitre Hotel, and, presently, with an ever increasing crowd, we ran at his heels to Magdalen Tower. We gained the spiral stone staircase with a good few on it in advance of us, and a mighty multitude following behind. Then it was, when about halfway up, and anything save advance was impossible, that the youngest and the tallest of us announced that giddiness had come upon her, and that she was unable to move. The faithful undergraduate rose to the occasion, and immediately directed her to put her arms round his waist. This she did, and, unsolicited, buried her face in his Norfolk jacket's waist-band. Thus they arrived safely at the antechamber to the roof. There we left her, and climbed the ladder that leads to the roof. The sun rose, the white-robed choir warbled their Latin hymn, the Tower rocked, we saw its battlements sway between us and its neighbour spires, and while these things were occurring, a very long thing, like an alligator, crawled across the leads towards us—the youngest of the party, unable to be out of it, but equally unable to stand up. The faithful undergraduate renewed his attentions.

All this is long ago; the two gayest spirits, who made the fortunes of that visit, have left us. Magdalen, and its cloisters, and its music, have moved

into the bright places of memory. When I think now of those May days

> "There comes no answer but a sigh,
> A wavering thought of the grey roofs,
> The fluttering gown, the gleaming oars,
> And the sound of many bells." [1]

and I "can make reply," falteringly,

> "'I too have seen Oxford.'"

About a fortnight after this we sold "The Real Charlotte" to Messrs. Ward and Downey for £250 and half American rights (which, as far as I can remember, never materialised). After this we devoted ourselves to the trousseau of the youngest of the party—which was a matter that had not been divulged to the faithful undergraduate, and is only mentioned now in order to justify the chronicling of two of the comments of Castle Haven on the accompanying display of wedding presents. One critic said that to see them was like being in Paradise. Another declared that it was for all the world like a circus.

Are things that are equal to the same thing equal to each other? It is a question for the Don of Magdalen to decide.

* * * * *

Not for another year did "The Real Charlotte" see the light. Various business disasters pursued and detained her; it was in May, 1894, that she at length appeared, and was received by no means with the trumpets and shawms suggested by Sir William Gregory.

[1] "*Et in Arcadia Ego*," E. L. in the *Spectator*. August 25, 1917.

One distinguished London literary paper pronounced it to be " one of the most disagreeable novels we have ever read " ; and ended with the crushing assertion that it could " hardly imagine a book more calculated to depress and disgust even a hardened reader . . . the amours are mean, the people mostly repulsive, and the surroundings depressing." Another advised us to " call in a third coadjutor, in the shape of a judicious but determined expurgator of rubbish " ; *The Weekly Sun*, which did indeed, as Martin said, give us the best, and best written, notice that we had had, ended a review of eight columns by condemning the book as " unsympathetic, hard, and harsh," though " worthy of study, of serious thought, of sombre but perhaps instructive reflection." A few reviewers of importance certainly showed us—as St. Paul says—no little kindness, (not that I wish it to be inferred that reviewers are a barbarous people, which would be the height of ingratitude,) but, on the whole, poor Charlotte fared badly, and one Dublin paper, while " commending the book " to its readers, even saying that Francie was " an attractive heroine," went on to deplore the " undeniable air of vulgarity which clings to her," and finally exclaimed, with grieved incredulity, " Surely no girl of Francie's social position screams, ' G'long, ye dirty fella ' ! "

A very regrettable incident, but, I fear (to quote kind Mr. Brown), though legendary, it is not nonsensical.

So was it also with our own friends. My mother first wrote, briefly, " All here loathe Charlotte." With the arrival of the more favourable reviews her personal " loathing " became modified ; later, at my behest, she gave me the following able synopsis of unskilled opinion.

" As you told me to give you faithfully all I heard, pro and con, about Charlotte, I will do so.

" Mrs. A. ' Very clever, very clever, but I have no

praise for it, Mrs. Somerville, no praise! The subjects are too nasty! I have no interest in such vulgar people, and I'm sure the Authors have really none either, but it is very clever of them to be able to write at all, and to get money for it!'

"Mrs. B. was extremely interested in the book and thought it most powerful, but said that nothing would induce her even to tell her sisters that such a book was to be had, as the imprecations would shock them to that extent that they would never get over it.

"Then Miss C. didn't like it, first because of the oaths, and secondly because it would give English people the idea that in *all* ranks of Irish life the people were vulgar, rowdy, and gave horrible parties.

"The D.'s didn't like it either, for the same reasons, but thought if you had given 'Christopher' a stronger back-bone, and hadn't allowed him to say 'Lawks!', that he would have been a redeeming character, and also 'Pamela,' had she only been brought forward more prominently, and that you had allowed her to marry 'Cursiter.'"

From these, and many similar pronouncements, it was but too apparent to us that the Doctors were entirely agreed in their decision, and that my mother had herself summarised the general opinion, when she wrote to one of her sisters that "Francie deserved to break her neck for her vulgarity; she certainly wasn't nice enough in any way to evoke sympathy, and the girls *had* to kill her to get the whole set of them out of the awful muddle they had got into!"

The authors, on receipt of these criticisms, laughed rather wanly. "*Sophie pleurait, mais la poupée restait cassée.*" Although we could laugh, a certain depression was inescapable.

I do not say that we had only adverse opinions from our friends. Our own generation sustained us with warm and enthusiastic approval, and we were fortified

by this, despite the fact that a stern young brother wrote to me in high reprobation, and ended by saying that "such a combination of bodily and mental hideosity as Charlotte could never have existed outside of your and Martin's diseased imaginations." Which left little more to be said.

On the whole, the point insisted on, to the exclusion of every other aspect of the book, was the "unpleasantness" of the characters. The pendulum has now swung the other way, and "pleasant" characters usually involve a charge of want of seriousness. Very humbly, and quite uncontroversially, I may say that Martin and I have not wavered from the opinion that "The Real Charlotte" was, and remains, the best of our books, and, with this very mild commendation, the matter, as far as we are concerned, closes.

We were in Paris (with the tallest and youngest of the Magdalen Tower party) when Charlotte was published. I was working for a brief spell at the studio of M. Délécluse; Martin was writing a series of short articles, which, with the title "Quartier Latinities," and adorned by drawings of mine, appeared in *Black and White*. The casual, artless, yet art-full life of "The Quarter" fascinated Martin; she had the gift of living it with zest, while remaining far enough outside it to be able to savour its many absurdities. As we said, in one of our books, and the idea was hers, "The Irishman is always the critic in the stalls, and is also, in spirit, behind the scenes." The "English Club" for women artists, of which I was a member, soon got to know, and to accept, the slim and immaculately neat critic of the simple habits and customs of its members, and resented not at all her analysis of its psychology. *Black and White* had an immense vogue there; some day, perhaps, those articles, and others of Martin Ross's stray writings, may be collected and reprinted. If the "Boul' Miche',"

now orphaned of its artists, ever gathers a new generation under its wings, these divagations of *autre-fois* will have an interest of their own for those that survive of the old order.

We had rooms at a very unfashionable hotel on the Boulevard Mont Parnasse, at the corner of the Boulevard Raspail. It was mainly occupied by art students, and the flare of *esprit à bruler* lit its many windows at the sacred hour of *le fife o'clock*, or such of its windows as appertained to *les Anglaises*. The third member of our *ménage* went daily to what she spoke of as "The Louvre"—meaning the *Magasin*, not the *Musée*—and explained rather vaguely that she had "to buy things for a bazaar." Her other occupation was that of cook. There was a day when "Ponce" (my fellow lodger, it may be remembered, in the Rue Madame) came beneath our windows at lunch time and was offered hospitality. She declined, and was then desired to "run over to Carraton's" and purchase for the cook a dozen of eggs. This she did, and cried to us from the street below—(we were swells, living *au premier*)—that the eggs were there. The cook is a person of resource, and in order to save trouble, she bade Ponce wait, while she lowered to her a basket, by the apostolic method of small cords, in which she should place the eggs. Across the way was a *café*, dedicated to a mysterious and ever-thirsty company, "*Les bons Gymnasiarques*." The attention of these beings, and that of a neighbouring cab-stand, was speedily attracted to the proceeding. Spellbound they watched the cook as she lowered the basket to Ponce. Holding their breaths, they watched Ponce entrust the eggs to the basket; as it rose, they rose from their seats beneath the awning; as the small cords broke—which of course they did, when the basket was about halfway to the window—and the eggs enveloped Ponce in involuntary omelette, the *Bons Gymnasiarques*

cheered. I have little doubt but that that omelette helped to cement the Entente Cordiale, which was at that time still considerably below the national horizon.

I am aware that tales of French as she is spoke by the English have been many, "but each must mourn his own (she saith)," and we had a painful episode or two that must be recounted. The gentlemen of the *Magasin du Louvre* could, if they would, contribute some stirring stories. One wonders if one of them is still dining out on the tall young English lady who told him at the *Rayon* devoted to slippers that she desired for herself a pair of *pantalons rouges?* And if another, who presided at a lace counter, has forgotten the singular request made to him for a "*Front avec des rides*"? "A wrinkled forehead!" one seems to hear him murmur to himself, "In the name of a pipe, how, at her age, can I procure this for her?"

These are, however, child's play in comparison with what befell one of my cousins, when shopping in Geneva with an aunt, a tall and impressive aunt, godly, serious, middle-aged, the Church of Ireland, as it were, embodied, appropriately, in a black Geneva gown. My aunt desired a pillow to supplement the *agrémens* of her hotel; one imagines that the equivalents for mattress and for pillow must have, in one red ruin, blended themselves in her mind. "*Oreiller*," "*sommier*," something akin to these formulated itself in her brain and sprang to her lips, and she said,

"Donnez moi un sommelier, s'il vous plait."

"M'dame?" replied the shopman, in a single, curt, slightly bewildered syllable.

"Un sommelier," repeated the embodiment of the Irish Church, distinctly, "Je dors toujours avec deux sommeliers——"

Here my cousin intervened.

CHAPTER XXI

SAINT ANDREWS

For the remainder of the year '94 the exigencies of family life kept Martin and me apart, she at Ross, or paying visits, I at home, doing the illustrations for our Danish tour, with complete insincerity, from local models. My diary says, "Impounded Mother to pose as the Hofjägermesterinde, and Mary Anne Whoolly as a Copenhagen market-woman—as Tennyson prophetically said, 'All, all are Danes.'"

In the meantime "The Real Charlotte" continued to run the race set before her, with a growing tide of approval from those whose approval we most valued, and with steadily improving sales. In November I went to Leicestershire (a visit that shall be told of hereafter), and thence I moved on to Paris.

In January, 1895, Martin went to Scotland, and paid a very enjoyable visit to some friends at St. Andrews, a visit that was ever specially memorable for her from the fact that it was at St. Andrews, among the kind and sympathetic and clever people whom she met there, that she realised for the first time that with "The Real Charlotte" we had made a mark, and a mark that was far deeper and more impressive than had been hitherto suspected by either of us. The enjoyment of this discovery was much enhanced by the fact that Mr. Andrew Lang,

whom she met at St. Andrews, was one of the firmest friends of the much-abused "Miss Mullen."

I have some letters that Martin wrote from St. Andrews, to me, in Paris, and I do not think that I need apologise for transcribing them here, even though some of her comments and descriptions do not err on the side of over-formality. Her pleasure in the whole experience can, I think, only give pleasure in return to the people who were so kind to her, and whose welcome to her, as a writer, was so generous, and so unexpected. Brief as was her acquaintance with Mr. Lang, his delightful personality could hardly have been better comprehended than it was by her, and I believe that his friends will understand, through all the chaff of her descriptions, that he had no more genuine appreciator than Martin Ross.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (St. Andrews, Jan. 16, 1895.)

"It *is* a long journey here from Ross, by reason of the many changes, and by reason of my back," (she had fallen downstairs at Ross, and had hurt her back, straining and bruising it very badly,) "which gave me rather a poor time. I hurt it horribly getting in and out of carriages, and was rather depressed about it altogether . . . However it is ever so much better to-day, and none the worse for the dinner last night. I don't think I looked *too* bad, in spite of all. I was ladylike and somewhat hectic and hollow-eyed. The Langs have large rooms, and their dinner-party was fourteen . . . an ugly nice youth was my portion, and I was put at Andrew Lang's left. I was not shy, but anxious. A. L. is very curious to look at; tall, very thin, white hair, growing far down his forehead, and shading dark eyebrows and piercing-looking, charming brown eyes. He has a somewhat foxey profile, a lemon-pale face and a black moustache.

Altogether very quaint looks, and appropriate. I think he is shy; he keeps his head down and often does not look at you when speaking, his voice is rather high and indistinct, and he pitches his sentences out with a jerk. Anyhow I paid court to my own young man for soup and fish time, and found him most agreeable and clever, and I *did* talk of hunting, and he was mad about it, so now! no more of your cautionary hints!

"To me then Andrew L. with a sort of off-hand fling,

"'I suppose you're the one that did the writing?'

"I explained with some care that it was not so. He said he didn't know how any two people could equally evolve characters, etc., that *he* had tried, and it was always he or the other who did it all. I said I didn't know how we managed, but anyhow that I knew little of book-making as a science. He said I must know a good deal, on which I had nothing to say. He talked of Miss Broughton, Stevenson, and others, as personal friends, and exhibited at intervals a curious silent laugh up under his nose. . . . He was so interesting that I hardly noticed how ripping was the dinner, just as good as it could be. I then retired upon my own man for a while, and Andrew upon his woman; then my youth and he and I had a long talk about Oscar Wilde and others. Altogether I have seldom been more entertained and at ease. After dinner the matrons were introduced and were very civil, and praised Charlotte for its 'delightful humour, and freshness and newness of feeling,' and so on. One said that her son told her he would get anything else of ours that he could lay his hands on. Then the men again. I shared an unknown man with a matron, and then the good and kind Andrew drew a chair up and discoursed me, and told me how he is

writing a life of Joan of Arc—'the greatest human being since Jesus Christ.' He seems *wonderfully* informed on all subjects. To hear him reel off the historical surroundings of the Book of Esther would surprise you and would scandalise the Canon. He offered to give me a lesson in golf, but, like Cuthbert's soldier servant I 'pleaded the 'eadache.' I hear that I was highly honoured, as he very often won't talk to people and is rude; I must say I thought he was, in his jerky, unconventional way, polite to everyone . . . This is a cultured house, and all the new books are here . . . I wish I had been walking in the moonlight by the Seine. It is like a dream to think of it. Talking to Andrew Lang has made me feel that nothing I could write *could* be any good; he seems to have seen the end of perfection. I will take my stand on Charlotte, I think, and learn to make my own clothes, and so subside noiselessly into middle age."

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (St. Andrews, Jan. 23, 1895.)

"Do you know that even now the sun doesn't rise here till 8.30 at the best; at the worst it is not seen till about a quarter to nine! This, and the amazing cold of the wind make one know that this is pretty far north . . . Since I last wrote various have been the dissipations. Afternoon teas, two dinners, an organ recital, a concert. It is very amusing. They are all, as people, more interesting than the average, being Scotch, and they have a high opinion of Charlotte. I am beginning to be accustomed to having people introduced to me, and feeling that they expect me to say something clever. I never do. I am merely very conversational, and feel in the highest spirits, which is the effect of the air. It is passing pleasant to hear my nice hostess tell me how

she went into an assembly of women (and this being St. Andrews, mostly clever ones) and heard them raving of Charlotte. She then said, 'I know one of the authors, and she is coming to stay with me!' Sensation! By the bye, several people have told me that Charlotte is like 'La Cousine Bette,' which is one of Balzac's novels. I had to admit that we have neither of us read Balzac. At one dinner-party the host, who is an excellent photographer, showed some very good lantern-slides, mostly ruins, old churches and the like, being things Mr. Lang is interested in. Finally came some statuary groups; from outside South Kensington, I think; horrible blacks on the backs of camels, etc. On the first glimpse of these Andrew, who had, I think, been getting bored, shuddered, and fled away into the next room, refusing to return till all was over.

"'If you had any Greek statuary——' he said, feebly, but there was none.

"Then I was turned on to shriek like a dog, and he was bewildered and perturbed, but not amused. He asked me, in an unhappy way, how I did it. I said by main strength, the way the Irishman played the fiddle. This was counted a good jest. On that the Langs left, he saying in a vague, dejected way, apropos of nothing, 'If you'd like me to take you round the town sights I'll go—perhaps if Monday were fine——' he then faded out of the house.

"On Monday no sign of him, nor on Tuesday either. I withered in neglect, though assured that he never kept appointments, or did anything. Yesterday he sent word that he would come at 2.30, and he really did. The weather was furiously Arctic.

"'Doctor Nansen, I presume?' said I, coming in dressed and ready. He looked foolish, and admitted it *was* a bad day for exploration. (Monday had

been lovely.) However we went. You will observe that I was keeping my tail very erect.

"In the *iron* blast we went down South Street, where most things are. It is a little like the High at Oxford, on a small trim scale. Andrew was immediately very nice, and I think he likes showing people round. Have I mentioned that he is a gentleman? Rather particularly so. It is worth mentioning. He was a most perished-looking one, this piercing day, with his white face, and his grey hair under a deer-stalker, but still he looks all that. I won't at this time tell you of all the churches and places he took me through. It was pleasant to hear him, in the middle of the leading Presbyterian Church, and before the pew opener, call John Knox a scoundrel, with intensest venom. In one small particular you may applaud me. He showed me a place where Lord Bute is scrabbling up the ruins of an old Priory and building ugly red sandstone imitations on the foundations. I said,

> "'The sacred Keep of Ilion is rent
> With shaft and pit;'

"This is the beginning of a sonnet by Andrew Lang, in the 'Sonnets of this Century,' mourning the modern prying into the story of Troy.

"We talked of dogs, and I quoted from Stevenson's Essay. *He* also has written an attack on them, having been unaware of Stevenson's. He keeps and adores a cat, which he says hates him . . . While in the College Library Dr. Boyd (the 'Country Parson') came in and spoke to Mr. Lang. I examined the nearest bookcase, but was ware of the C.P.'s china blue eye upon me, and he presently spoke to me. He is like a clean, rubicund priest, with a high nose; more than all he is like a creditable ancestor on a wall, and should have a choker and a high coat collar.

He told me that his wife is now 'gloating over Charlotte,' which was nice of him, and I am to go to tea with them to-morrow. *Why* aren't you here to take your share?

"I said to Andrew that I thought of going to Edinburgh on Monday, to see a few things, and he said he would be there and would show me Holyrood. He said in his resigned voice, 'I'll meet you anywhere you like.' . . . I am going to write to Mr. Blackwood, who has asked me to go to see him. I will ask him if he would like the 'Beggars.' Andrew L. wants to go there too, so we may go together. Now you must be sick of A. L. and I will mention only two or three more things about him.

"He put a notice of Charlotte into some American magazine for which he writes, before he knew me. I believe it is a good one, but am rather shy of asking about it. You will be glad that she is getting a lift in America. I hope some of your artist friends will see it. He told me that Charlotte treated of quite a new phase, and seemed to think that was its chiefest merit. He would prefer our writing in future more of the sort of people one is likely to meet in everyday life. He put his name in the Mark Twain Birthday Book, and I told him you had compiled it. Lastly, I may remark that when he leaves St. Andrews to-morrow, all other men go with him, as far as I am concerned, or rather they stay, and they seem *bourgeois* and commonplace (which is ungrateful, and not strictly true, and of course there are exceptions, and, chief among them, my nice host, and Father A., who are always what one likes). . . Post has come, bringing a most unexpected tribute to the Real C. from T. P. O'Connor in the *Weekly Sun*. It is really one of the best, and best-written notices we have ever had. I read it with high gratification, in spite

of his calling us 'Shoneens'—(whatever they may be) . . . The Editor of *Black and White* has written asking for something about St. Andrews, from an Irish point of view. 'But what about the artist?' says he. What indeed? And I don't know what to write about. Everyone has written about St. Andrews. . . . I saw them play the game of 'Curling,' which was funny, like bowls played on ice, with big round stones that slide. The friends of a stone tear in front of it as it slides, sweeping the ice with twigs so as to further its progress. When a good bowl is made they say 'Fine stone!' It is in many ways absurd. . . ."

St. Andrews, Jan. 29. '95.

". . . The dissipations have raged, and I have been much courted by the ladies of St. Andrews. I shall not come back here again. Having created an impression I shall retire on it before they begin to find me out. It will be your turn next. . . . Mrs. Lang wrote to say that the B——s, with whom the Langs were staying in Edinburgh, wanted me to lunch there, being 'proud to be my compatriots.' Professor B. is Irish, and is professor of Greek at Edinburgh University, and Mrs. B. is also Irish. . . . Accordingly, yesterday I hied me forth alone. It was a lovely hard frost here, but by the time I was half way —(it is about two hours by train)—the snow began. I drove to the B——s, along Princes Street, all horrible with snow, but my breath was taken away by the beauty of it. There is a deep fall of ground along one side, where once there was a lake, then with one incredible *lep*, up towers the crag, three hundred feet, and the Castle, and the ramparts all along the top. It was foggy, with sun struggling through, and to see that thing hump its great shoulder into the haze was fine. You know what I think of Scott. You would

think the same if you once saw Edinburgh. It was almost overwhelming to think of all that has happened there— However, to resume, before you are bored.

> "Andhrew he resaved me,
> So dacent and so pleasant,
> He's as nice a man in fayture
> As I ever seen before."

(*vide* Jimmy and the Song of Ross). He is indeed, and he has a most correct and rather effeminate profile. No one else was in. He was as miserable about the snow as a cat, and huddled into a huge coat lined with sable. In state we drove up to the Castle by a long round, and how the horse got up that slippery hill I don't know. The Castle was very grand; snowy courtyards with grey old walls, and chapels, and dining-halls, most infinitely preferable to Frederiksborg. The view should have been noble; as the weather was, one could only see Scott's monument—a very fine thing—and a very hazy town. It is an awful thing to look over those parapets! A company of the Black Watch was drilling in the outer courtyard, very grand, and a piper went strutting like a turkeycock, and skirling. It was wild, and I stood up by 'Mons Meg' and was thrilled. Is it an insult to mention that Mons Meg is the huge, historic old gun, and crouches like a she-mastiff on the topmost crag, glaring forth over Edinburgh with the most concentrated defiance? You couldn't believe the expression of that gun. I asked Andrew L. whether it was the same as 'Muckle-mouthed Meg,' having vague memories of the name. He said in a dying gasp that Muckle-mouthed Meg was his great-great-grandmother! That was a bad miss, but I preserved my head just enough to enquire what had become of the 'Muckle mouth.' (I may add that his own is admirable.) He could only say with some

slight embarrassment that it must have gone in the other line.

"We solemnly viewed the Regalia, of which he knew the history of every stone, and the room where James VI was born, a place about as big as a dinner-table, and so on, and his information on all was petrifying. Then it was all but lunch time, but we flew into St. Giles' on the way home to see Montrose's tomb. A more beautiful and charming face than Montrose's you couldn't see, and the church is a very fine one. An old verger caught sight of us, and instantly flung to the winds a party he was taking round, and endeavoured to show us everything, in spite of A. L.'s protests. At length I firmly said, 'Please show us the door.' He smiled darkly, and led us to a door, which, when opened, led into an oaken and carven little room. He then snatched a book from a shelf—and a pen and ink from somewhere else.

"'I know distinguished visitors when I see them!' says he, showing us the signatures of all the Royalties and distinguished people, about two on each page. 'Please write your names.'

"Andrew wrote his, and I mine, on a blank sheet, and there they remain for posterity. Andrew swears the verger didn't know him, and that it was all the fur coat, and that our names were a bitter disappointment—*why* didn't I put 'Princess of Connemara'?

"Then to lunch. The B——s were *very* nice. He is tall and thin, she short, both as pleasant and unconventional and easy as nice Irish people alone are. After lunch she and Mrs. Lang tackled me in the drawing-room about the original of the Real C. I gaily admitted that she was drawn from life, and that you had known her a thousand times better than I. Then I told them various tales of her, and, without thinking, revealed her name.

"'Oh yes!' says Mrs. B. in ecstasy, 'she was my husband's cousin!'

"I covered my face with my hands, and I swear that the blush trickled through my fingers. I then rose, in strong convulsions, and attempted to fly the house. Professor B—— was called in to triumph over me, and said that she was only a very distant cousin, and that he had never seen her, and didn't care what had been said of her. They were *enchanted* about it and my confusion, and they have asked me to go to their place in Ireland, with delightful cordiality . . . Andrew L. and I then walked forth to Blackwood's, a very fine old-fashioned place, with interesting pictures. We were instantly shown upstairs, to a large, pleasant room, where was Mr. Blackwood . . . I broached the subject of the 'Beggars,' while Andrew stuck his nose into a book. Mr. Blackwood said he would like to see it. . . . Mr. Lang then spoke to him about an article on Junius that he is writing, and *I* put *my* nose into a book. We then left. There was no time to see Holyrood. . . . Thus to the train. My most comfortable thought during the two hours' journey home was that in talking to Mrs. B. I had placed Charlotte on *your* shoulders! Andrew L. was very kind, and told me that if ever I wanted anything done that he could help me in, that he would do it . . . My last impression of him is of his whipping out of the carriage as it began to move on, in the midst of an account of how Buddha died of eating roast pork to surfeit."

CHAPTER XXII

AT ÉTAPLES

In February, 1895, I met Martin in London, and found her in considerable feather, consequent on her reviving visit to St. Andrews, and on that gorgeous review in which we had been called hard and pitiless censors, as well as sardonic, squalid, and merciless observers of Irish life. We felt this to be so uplifting that we lost no time in laying the foundations of a further "ferocious narrative." This became, in process of time, "The Silver Fox." It had the disadvantage, from our point of view, of appearing first in a weekly paper (since defunct). This involved a steady rate of production, and recurring "curtains," which are alike objectionable; the former to the peace of mind of the author, while the latter are noxious trucklings to and stimulation of the casual reader. That, at least, is how the stipulated sensation at the end of each weekly instalment appeared to us at the time, and I have seen no reason for relinquishing these views. "The Silver Fox," like most of our books, was the victim of many interruptions; it was finished in 1896, and as soon as its weekly career was careered, it was sold to Messrs. Lawrence and Bullen, who published it in October, 1897. It was a curious coincidence that almost in the same week we hunted a silver-grey fox with the West Carbery hounds.

The hunt took place on Friday, the 13th of the month, we lost the fox in a quarry-hole, in which a farmer had, at the bidding of a dream, dug, fruitlessly, and at much expense, for fairy gold, and two of our horses were very badly cut. I saw the Silver Fox break covert, it was the Round Covert at Bunalun, and by all the laws of romance I ought to have broken my neck; but the Powers of Darkness discredited him, and neither he nor I were any the worse for the hunt. I do not remember ever seeing him again, and I presume he returned immediately to the red covers (without a t) of our book, from which he had been given a temporary outing.

It was in May and June, 1895, that we spent a happy and primitive fortnight in one of the Isles of Aran; we have described it in "Some Irish Yesterdays," and it need not be further dealt with, though I may quote from my diary the fact that on "May 22. M. & I rescued a drowning child by the quay, and got very wet thereby. Several Natives surveyed performance, pleased, but calm, and did not offer assistance."

In July, an entirely new entertainment was kindly provided for us by a General Election; our services were requisitioned by the Irish Unionist Alliance, and with a deep, inward sense of ignorance (not to say of play-acting), we sailed forth to instruct the East Anglian elector in the facts of Irish politics. It was a more arduous mission than we had expected, and it opened for us a window into English middle-class life through which we saw and learned many unsuspected things. Notably the persistence of English type, and the truth that was in George Eliot. We met John Bunyan, unconverted, it is true, but unmistakably he; cobbling in a roadside stall, full of theories, and endowed by heredity with a splendid Biblical speech in which to set them forth. Seth Bede

was there, a house-painter and a mystic, with transparent, other-worldly blue eyes and a New Testament standard of ethics. Dinah Morris was there too, a female preacher and a saintly creature, who shamed for us the play-acting aspect of the affair into abeyance, and whose high and serious spirit recognised and met Martin's spirit on a plane far remote from the sordid or ludicrous controversies of electioneering.

These few and elect souls we met by chance and privilege, not by intention. We had been given "professional" people, mainly, as our victims. Doctors, lawyers, and non-conforming parsons of various denominations. It taught us an unforgettable lesson of English honesty, level-headedness, and open-mindedness. Also of English courtesy. With but a solitary exception, we were received and listened to, seriously, and with a respect that we secretly found rather discomposing. They took themselves seriously, and their respect almost persuaded us that we were neither actors nor critics, but real people with a real message. The whole trend of Irish politics has changed since then. Every camp has been shifted, many infallibles have failed. I am not likely to go on the stump again, but I shall ever remember with pride that on this, our single entry into practical politics, our man got in, and that a Radical poster referred directly, and in enormous capital letters, to Martin and me as "IRISH LOCUSTS."

I went to Aix-les-Bains a year or two after this. It was the first of several experiences of that least oppressive of penalties for the sins of your forefathers, if not of your own. There was one year when among the usual number of kings and potentates was one of the Austrian Rothschilds. With him was an inseparable private secretary, who had been, one would say, cut with a fret-saw straight from an Assyrian

bas-relief. His profile and his crimped beard were as memorable as the example set by M. le Baron to the gamblers at the Cercle. Followed by a smart crowd in search of a sensation, the Baron and the Secretary moved to the table of "*Les Petits Chevaux*," and people waited to see the Bank broken in a single coup. The Baron murmured a command to the Profile. The Profile put a franc on "*Egalité*." "*Egalité*" won. The process was repeated until the Baron was the winner of ten francs, when the couple retired, and were seen there no more, and one began to understand why rich men are rich. There was one dazzling night with "the little horses" when I found myself steering them in the Chariot of the Sun. I could not make a mistake; where I led, the table, with gamblers' instant adoption of a mascot, followed. I found myself famous, and won forty-five francs. Alas! I was not Baron de Rothschild, or even the Assyrian Profile, and the rest is silence.

From Aix I went to Boulogne, and meeting Martin there, we moved on to Étaples, which was, that summer (1898), the only place that any self-respecting painter could choose for a painting ground. Cazin, and a few others of the great, had made it fashionable, and there were two "Classes" there (which, for the benefit of the uninitiated, are companies of personally-conducted art-students, who move in groups round a law-giver, and paint series of successive landscapes, that, in their one-ness and yet progressiveness, might be utilised with effect as cinematograph backgrounds). We found, by appointment, at Étaples a number of our particular friends, "Kinkie," "Madame Là-Là," "The Dean," Helen Simpson, Anna Richards, a pleasingly Irish-American gang, with whom we had worked and played in Paris. The two or three small hotels and boarding-houses were full of painters, and

the Quartier Latin held the town in thrall. As far, at least, as bedrooms, studios, and feeding places were concerned. Sheds and barns and gardens, all were absorbed; everyone gave up everything to *MM. Les Étrangers;* everyone, I should say, who had been confirmed. Confirmation at Étaples was apparently of the nature of the Conversion of St. Paul in its effect upon the character. After confirmation, instant politeness and kindness to the stranger within their gates characterised the natives; prior to that ceremony, it is impossible to give any adequate impression of the atrocity of the children of the town. If an artist pitched his easel and hoisted his umbrella on any spot unsurrounded by a ten-foot wall, he was immediately mobbed by the unconfirmed. The procedure was invariable. One chose, with the usual effort, the point of view. One set one's palette and began to work. A child strayed round a corner and came to a dead set. It retired; one heard its sabots clattering as it flew. Presently, from afar, the clatter would be renewed, an hundred-fold; shrill cries blended with it. Then the children arrived. They leaned heavily on the shoulders of the painter, and were shaken off. They attempted, often successfully, to steal his colours. They postured between him and his subject, dancing, and putting forth their tongues. They also spat.

The maddened painters made deputations to the Mayor, to the Curé, to the Police, and from all received the same reply, that *méchant* as the children undeniably were now, they would become entirely *sage* after confirmation. We did not attempt to dispute the forecast, but our contention that, though consolatory to parents, it was of no satisfaction to us, was ignored by the authorities. Therefore, in so far as was possible, we took measures into our own hands. I

wrote home for a hunting-crop, and Martin took upon herself the varying yet allied offices of Chucker-out and Whipper-in. She was not only fleet of foot, but subtle in expedient and daring in execution. I recall with ecstasy a day when a wholly loathsome boy, to whose back a baby appeared to be glued, was put to flight by her with the stick of my sketching-umbrella. Right across the long Bridge of Étaples he fled, howling; the baby, crouched on his shoulders, sitting as tight as Tod Sloan, while Martin, filled with a splendid wrath, belaboured him heavily below the baby, ceasing not until he had plunged, still howling, into a fisherman's cottage. Another boy, tending cattle on the marshes, drove a calf in front of us, and, with a weapon that might have been the leg of a table, beat it sickeningly about the eyes. In an instant Martin had snatched the table-leg from him and hurled it into a wide dyke, the next moment she had sent his cap, skimming like a clay pigeon, across it, and "Madame Là-Là" (who is six feet high), rising, cobra-like, from the lair in which she had concealed herself from the enemy, chased the calf from our neighbourhood. Later, we heard him indicate Martin to his fellows.

"*Elle est méchante, celle la!*"—and, to our deep gratification, the warning was accepted.

In those far-off times Paris Plage and Le Touquet were little more than names, and were represented by a few villas and chalets of fantastic architecture peppered sparsely among the sand-dunes and in the little fairy-tale forests of toy pine-trees that divided Étaples from Le Touquet. There was a villa, whose touching name of "Home, *Swet* Home," appealed to the heated wayfarer, where now a Red Cross hospital is a stepping-stone to "Home," for many a British wayfarer who has fallen by the way, and pale

English boys, in blue hospital kit, lie about on the beach where we have sat and sketched the plump French ladies in their beautiful bathing dresses.

It was among Cazin's sand-dunes, possibly on the very spot where Hagar is tearing her hair over Ishmael (in his great picture, which used to hang in the Luxembourg), that the "Irish R.M." came into existence. During the previous year or two we had, singly and jointly, been writing short stories and articles, most of which were republished in a volume, "All on the Irish Shore." Many of these had appeared in the *Badminton Magazine*, and its editor now requested us to write for it a series of such stories. Therefore we sat out on the sand hills, roasting in the great sunshine of Northern France, and talked, until we had talked Major Sinclair Yeates, R.M., and Flurry Knox into existence. "Great Uncle MacCarthy's" Ghost and the adventure of the stolen foxes followed, as it were, of necessity. It has always seemed to us that character presupposes incident. The first thing needful is to know your man. Before we had left Étaples, we had learned to know most of the people of the R.M.'s country very well indeed, and all the better for the fact that, of them all, "Slipper" and "Maria" alone had prototypes in the world as we knew it. All the others were members of a select circle of which Martin and I alone had the *entrée*. Or so at least we then believed, but since, of half a dozen counties of Ireland, at least, we have been categorically and dogmatically assured that "*all* the characters in the R.M." lived, moved, and had their being in them, we have almost been forced to the conclusion that there were indeed six Richmonds in every field, and that, in the spirit, we have known them all.

The illustrations to the first and second of the

stories were accomplished at Étaples, and, in the dearth of suitable models, Martin, and other equally improbable victims, had to be sacrificed. One piece of luck fell to me in the matter. I wished to make an end-drawing, for the first story, of a fox, and I felt unequal to evolving a plausible imitation from my inner consciousness. It may not be believed, but it is a fact that, as, one afternoon, I crossed the Bridge of Étaples, I met upon it a man leading a young fox on a chain, a creature as mysteriously heaven-sent as was the lion to the old "Man of God."

CHAPTER XXIII

PARIS AGAIN

We returned to Drishane in October, having by that time written and illustrated the third story of the series. Which was fortunate, as on the first of November, " November Day " as we call it in Carbery, we went a-hunting, and under my eyes Martin " took a toss " such as I trust I may never have to see again. It happened in the middle of a run; there was a bar across an opening into a field. It was a wooden bar, with bushes under it, and it was not very high, but firmly fixed. I jumped it, and called to her to come on. The horse she was riding, Dervish, was a good hunter, but was cunning and often lazy. He took the bar with his knees, and I saw him slowly fall on to his head, and then turn over, rolling on Martin, who had kept too tightly her grip of the saddle. Then he struggled to his feet, but she lay still.

It was two months before she was able again to " lift her hand serenely in the sunshine, as before," or so much as take a pen in it, and several years before she could be said to have regained such strength as had been hers. Nothing had been broken, and she had entirely escaped disfigurement, even though the eye-glasses, in which she always rode, had cut her brow; but one of the pummels of the saddle had

bruised her spine, and the shock to a system so highly-strung as hers was what might be expected. The marvel was that so fragile a creature could ever have recovered, but her spirit was undefeated, and long before she could even move herself in bed, she had begun to work with me again, battling against all the varied and subtle sufferings that are known only to those who have damaged a nerve centre, with the light-hearted courage that was so conspicuously hers.

During the second half of that black November we were writing "The Waters of Strife," which is the fourth story of the "R.M." series. Its chief incident was the vision which came to the central figure of the story, of the face of the man he had murdered. This incident, as it happened, was a true one, and was the pivot of the story. We had promised a monthly story, and in order to keep faith, we had written it with an effort that had required almost more than we had to give. The story now appears in our book as we originally wrote it, but on its first appearance in the *Badminton Magazine* a passage had been introduced by an alien and unsolicited collaborator, and "various jests" had been "eliminated as unfit" for, one supposes, the sensitive readers of the magazine. Sometimes one wonders who are these ethereal beings whose sensibilities are only shielded from shock by the sympathetic delicacy of editors. I remember once before being crushed by another editor. I had drawn, from life, for the Connemara Tour, a portrait of "Little Judy from Menlo," a Galway beggar-woman of wide renown. It was returned with the comment that "such a thing would shock delicate ladies." So, as the song says, "Judy being bashful said 'No, no, no'!" and returned to private life. Another and less distinguished beggar-woman once said to me of the disappointments of life,

"Such things must be, Miss Somerville, my darlin' gerr'l!" and authors must, one supposes, submit sometimes to be sacrificed to the susceptibilities of the ideal reader.

The twelve "R.M." stories kept us desperately at work until the beginning of August, 1899. Looking back on the writing of them, each one, as we finished it, seemed to be the last possible effort of exhausted nature. Martin hardly knew, through those strenuous months, what it was to be out of suffering. Even though it cannot be denied that we both of us found enjoyment in the writing of them, I look back upon the finish of each story as a nightmare effort. Copying our unspeakably tortuous MS. till the small hours of the morning of the last possible day; whirling through the work of the illustrations (I may confess that one small drawing, that of "Maria" with the cockatoo between her paws, was done, as it were "between the stirrup and the ground," while the horse, whose mission it was to gallop in pursuit of the postman, stamped and raged under my studio windows). By the time the last bundle had been dispatched Martin and I had arrived at a stage when we regarded an ink-bottle as a mad dog does a bucket of water. Rest, and change of air, for both of us, was indicated. I was sent to Aix, she went to North Wales, and we decided to meet in Paris and spend the winter there.

In the beginning of October, 1899, we established ourselves in an *appartement* in the Boulevard Edgar Quinet, and there we spent the next four months.

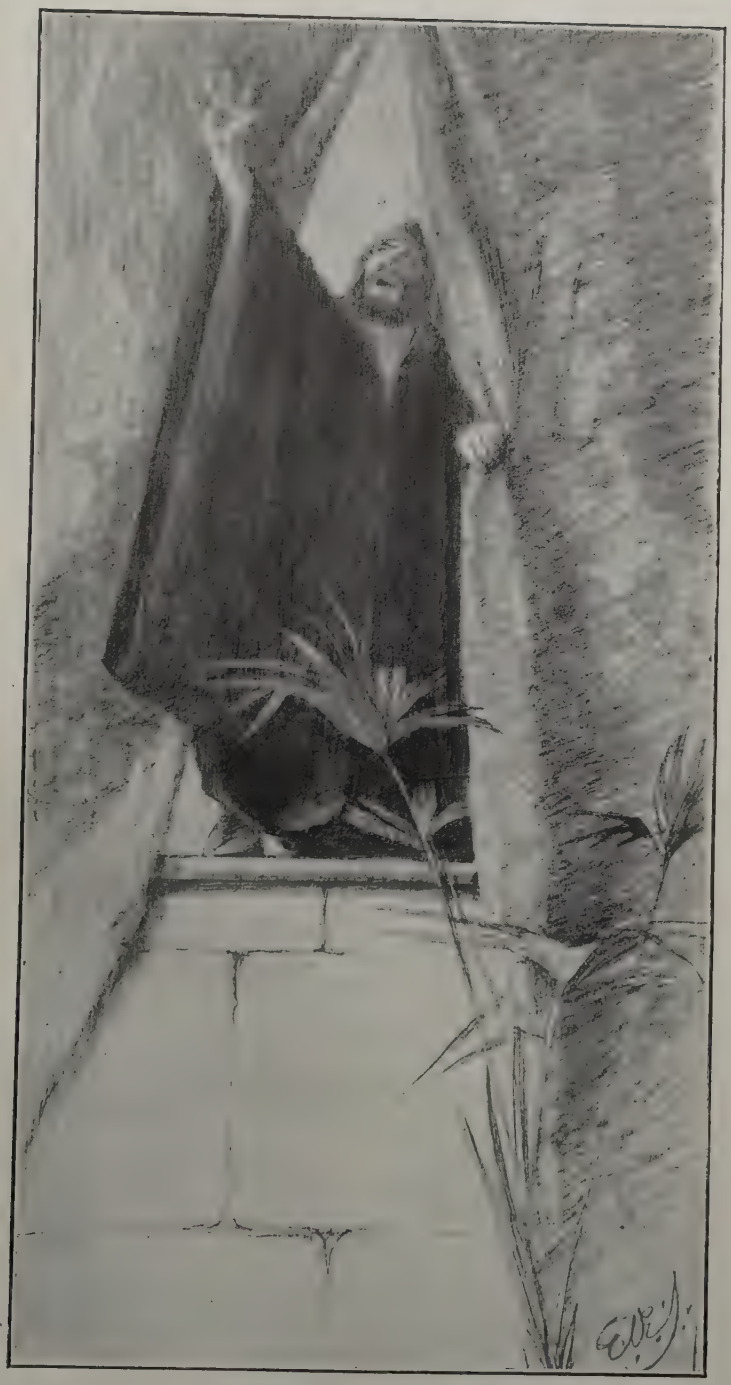
Looking back through our old diaries I recognise for how little of that time Martin was free from suffering of some kind. The effects of the hunting accident, and the strain of writing, too soon undertaken, were only now beginning to come to their own. Neuralgia, exhaustion, backaches, and all the in-

describable miseries of neurasthenia held her in thrall. It is probable that the bracing tonic of the Paris climate saved her from a still worse time, but she had come through her reserves, and was now going on pluck. We wrote, desultorily, when she felt equal to it, and I worked at M. Délécluse's studio in the mornings, and, with some others, assisted Mr. Cyrus Cuneo, a young, and then unknown, American, in getting up an " illustration class " in the afternoons. Most people have seen the brilliant black and white illustrations that Mr. Cuneo drew for the *Illustrated London News* and other papers and magazines, and his early death has left a blank that will not easily be filled. He could have been no more than four or five and twenty when I met him, and he was already an extraordinarily clever draughtsman. He was small, dark, and exceedingly good-looking, with a peculiarly beautiful litheness, balance, and swiftness of movement, that was to some extent explained by the fact that before he took up Art he had occupied the exalted position of " Champion Bantam of the South Pacific Slope " !

At that juncture we were all mad about a peculiar style of crayon drawing, which, as far as we were concerned, had been originated by Cuneo, and about a dozen of us took a studio in the Passage Stanilas, and worked there, from the most sensational models procurable. Cuneo was " *Massier* "; he found the models, and posed them (mercilessly), and we all worked like tigers, and brutally enjoyed the strung-up sensation that comes from the pressure of a difficult pose. Each stroke is Now or Never, every instant is priceless. Pharaoh of the Oppression was not firmer in the matter of letting the Children of Israel go, than we were with those unhappy models. I console myself by remembering that a good model has a

pride in his endurance in a difficult pose that is as sustaining as honest and just pride always is. Nevertheless, when I look over these studies, and see the tall magician, peering, on tip-toe, over a screen, and the High-priest denouncing the violation of the sanctuary, and the unfortunate Arab, half rising from his couch to scan the horizon, I recognise that for these models, though Art was indisputably long, Time could hardly have been said to be fleeting.

Mr. Whistler was at that time in Paris, and had a morning class for ladies only, and it was in their studio that we had our class. It was large, well-lighted, with plenty of stools and easels and a sink for washing hands and brushes. It also was thoroughly insanitary, and had a well-established reputation for cases of typhoid. As a precautionary measure we always kept a certain yellow satin cushion on the mouth of the sink; this, not because of any superstition as to the colour, or the cushion, but because there was no other available "stopper for the stink." (Thus uneo, whose language, if free, was always well chosen.) One of our members was a very clever American girl, who had broken loose from the bondage of the Whistler class. There, it appeared from her, if you had a soul, you could not think of calling it your own. It was intensively bossed by Mr. Whistler's *Massière*, on the lines laid down by Mr. Whistler, until, as my friend said, you had "no more use for it, and were just yelling with nerves." The model, whether fair, dark, red, white, or brown, had to be seen through Mr. Whistler's spectacles, and these, judging by the studies that were occasionally left on view, were of very heavily smoked glass. When it came to the *Massière* setting my American friend's palette, and dictating to her the flesh tones, the daughter of the Great Republic



"CHEZ CUNEO."

observed that she was used to a free country, and shook the dust off her feet, and scraped the mud off her palette, and retired. An interesting feature of the studio was that many sheets of paper on which Mr. Whistler had scribbled maxim and epigram were nailed on its walls, for general edification, and it might have served better had his lieutenant allowed these to influence the pupils, unsupported by her interpretations. Since then I have met some of these pronouncements in print, but I will quote one of those that I copied at the time, as it bears on the case in point.

"That flesh should ever be low in tone would seem to many a source of sorrow, and of vast vexation, and its rendering, in such circumstance, an unfailing occasion of suspicion, objection, and reproach; each objection—which is the more fascinating in that it would seem to imply superiority and much virtue on the part of the one who makes it—is vaguely based upon the popular superstition as to what flesh really is—when seen on canvas, for the people never look at Nature with any sense of its pictorial appearance, for which reason, by the way, they also never look at a picture with any sense of Nature, but unconsciously, from habit, with reference to what they have seen in other pictures. Lights have been heightened until the white of the tube alone remains. Shadows have been deepened until black only is left! Scarcely a feature stays in its place, so fierce is its intention of firmly coming forth. And in the midst of this unseemly struggle for prominence, the gentle truth has but a sorry chance, falling flat and flavourless and without force."

No one who has not lived, as we did, the life of "The Quarter" can at all appreciate its charm. In description—as I have already had occasion to say—

it is usual, and more entertaining, to dwell upon the disasters of daily life, but though these, thanks to a *bonne à tout faire*, and a perfidious stove, were not lacking, Martin and I, and our friends, enjoyed ourselves. Small and select tea-parties were frequent; occasionally we aspired to giving what has been called by a gratified guest in the County Cork "a nice, ladylike little dinner," and in a letter of my own I find an account of a more unusual form of entertainment which came our way.

"A friendly and agreeable American, who works in the Studio, asked us to come and see her in her rooms, away back of Saint Sulpice. When we got there we found, as well as my American friend, a little incidental, casual mother, whom she had not thought worth mentioning before. She just said, briefly,

"'Oh, this is Mother,' which, after all, sufficed.

"'Mother' was a perfect specimen of one of the secret, serf-like American mothers, who are concealed in Paris, put away like a pair of warm stockings, or an old waterproof, for an emergency. She was a nice, shrivelled, little old thing, very kind and polite. Their room, which was about six inches square, had little in it save a huge and catafaltic bed with deep crimson curtains; the window curtains were deep crimson, the walls, which were brown, had panels of deep crimson. Hot air welled into the room through gratings. We sat and talked, and looked at picture postcards for a long time, and our tongues were beginning to hang out, from want of tea, and suffocation, when the daughter said something to the mother.

"There was then produced, from a sort of hole in the wall, sweet biscuits, and a bottle of wine, the latter also deep crimson (to match the room, no doubt). It was a fierce and heady vintage. I know not its

origin, I can only assure you that in less than two minutes from its consumption our faces were tremendously *en suite* with the curtains. We tottered home, clinging to each other, and lost our way twice."

We had ourselves an opportunity of offering a somewhat unusual form of hospitality to two of our friends, the occasion being nothing less than the expected End of the World. This was timed by the newspapers to occur on the night of November 15, and I will allow Martin to describe what took place. The beginning part of the letter gives the history of one of those curious and unlucky coincidences of which writing-people are more often the victims than is generally known, and for this reason I will transcribe it also.

V. F. M. to Mrs. Martin. (Nov. 23, 1899.)

". . . The story for the Christmas number of the *Homestead* came to a most untimely end; not that it was untimely, as we were at the very limit of time allowed for sending it in. It was finished, and we were just sitting down to copy it, when I chanced to look through last year's Xmas No. (which, fortunately, we happened to have here,) in order to see about the number of words. I then made the discovery that one of the stories last Christmas, by Miss Jane Barlow, no less! was built round the same idea as ours; one or two incidents quite startlingly alike, so much so that one couldn't possibly send in ours. It read like a sort of burlesque of Miss Barlow's, and would never have done. There was no time to rewrite it, so all we could do was to write and tell the Editor what had happened, and make our bows. E. sent him a sketch, as an *amende*, which he has accepted in the handsome and gentlemanlike spirit in which it was offered, and I sent him a little dull

article[1] that I happened to have here, on the chance that it might do to fill a corner, and it is to appear with E.'s sketch. But I am afraid, though he was very kind about it, that these things have not at all consoled the Editor, who wanted a story like the 'R.M.'s.'

"Nothing very interesting has happened here since the night of 'The Leonids,' the Shower of Stars that was to have happened last week. There was much excitement in Paris, at least the newspapers were excited. On my way to the dentist a woman at the corner of the boulevard was selling enormous sheets of paper, with '*La Fin du Monde, à trois heures!*' on them, and a gorgeous picture of Falbe's comet striking the earth. It was then 1.30, but I thought I had better go to the dentist just the same. I believe that lots of the poor people were very much on the jump about it. The Rain of Meteors was prophesied by the Observatory here for that night, and Kinkie, and the lady whom we call 'Madame Là Là,' arranged to spend the night in our sitting room (which has a good view of the sky in two aspects). We laid in provender and filled the stove to bursting, and our visitors arrived at about 9.30 p.m. It really was very like a wake, at the outset. The stipulation was that they were to call us if anything happened; I went to bed at 10.30, E. at midnight, and those unhappy creatures sat there all night, and *nothing* happened. They saw three falling stars, and they made tea three times (once in honour of each star), and they also had 'Maggi,' which is the French equivalent for Bovril, and twice as nice. During the night I could hear their stealthy steps going to and fro to the kitchen to boil up things on the gas stove. In the

[1] This article was subsequently incorporated in Martin Ross's sketch "Children of the Captivity" and is reprinted in "Some Irish Yesterdays."

awful dawn they crept home, and, I hear, turned up at the Studio looking just the sort of wrecks one might have expected.

"I believe that they did see a light go sailing up from the Dome of the Observatoire, (which we can see from here) and that was a balloon, containing a lady astronomer, Mademoiselle Klumpke, (who is, I believe an American) and others. She sailed away in the piercing cold to somewhere in the South of Switzerland, and I believe she saw a few dozen meteors. Anyhow, two days afterwards, she walked into Kinkie's studio, bringing a piece of mistletoe, and some flowers that she had gathered when she got out of the balloon down there."

The South African War made life in Paris, that winter, a school of adversity for all English, or nominally English, people. Each reverse of our Army —and if one could believe the French papers it would seem that such took place every second day—was snatched at by the people of Paris and their newspapers with howls of delight. Men in the omnibuses would thrust in our faces *La Patrie*, or some such paper, to exhibit the words "*Encore un Écrasement Anglais!*", in large, exultant letters, filling a page. Respectable old gentlemen, in "faultless morning dress," would cry "Oh yais!" as we passed; large tongues would be exhibited to us, till we felt we could have diagnosed the digestions of the Quarter. At last our turn came, and when the *Matin* had a line, "*Capitulation de Cronjé*," writ large enough for display, Martin made an expedition in an omnibus down "The Big Boulevards" for no purpose other than to flaunt it in the faces of her fellow passengers.

To Martin, who was an intensely keen politician, the aloofness of many of the art-students whom she met, from the War, the overthrow of the French

Government, from, in fact, any question on any subject outside the life of the studio, was a constant amazement.

In a letter from her to one of her sisters she releases her feelings on the subject.

V. F. M. to Mrs. Cuthbert Dawson.
(Paris, Nov. 29, 1899.)

"The French papers are realising that a mistake has been made in the attacks on the Queen, and the better ones are saying so. But the *Patrie*, the *Libre Parole*, and all that fleet of halfpenny papers that the poor read, have nailed their colours to the mast, and it seems as if their idea is to overthrow their present Government by fair means or foul. As long as this Government is in there will be no quarrel with England, but it might, of course, go out like a candle, any day. I daresay you have heard the *Rire* spoken of as one of the papers that ought to be suppressed. We bought the number that was to be all about the English, and all about them it was, a sort of comic history of England since the Creation, with Hyde Park as the Garden of Eden. The cover was a hauntingly horrible picture of Joan of Arc being burned. The rest of the pictures were dull, disgusting, and too furiously angry to be clever. We had pleasure in consigning the whole thing to the stove. . . . The students here, with exceptions, of course,—appear deaf and blind to all that goes on, and Revolutions in Paris, and the War in the Transvaal, are as nothing to them as compared with the pose of the model. In every street are crowds of them, scraping away at their charcoal 'academies' by the roomful, all perfectly engrossed and self-centred, and, I think, quite happy. Last Sunday we went to a mild little tea-party in a studio, where were several

of these artist-women, in their best clothes, and somewhere in the heart of the throng was a tiny hideosity, an American, (who has a studio in which R. B. once worked,) fat, bearded, and unspeakably common, but interesting.[1] Holding another court of the women was a microbe English artist, an absurd little thing to look at, but, I believe, clever; I hear that on weekdays he dresses like a French workman and looks like a toy that you would buy at a bazaar. No one talked anything but Art, except when occasionally one of the hostesses (there were four) hurriedly asked me what I thought of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám, or *how* two people managed to write together, just to show what good hostesses they were, while all the while they tried to listen to the harangues of the microbe or the hideosity. Poor things, it was very nice of them, and I was touched. There are about half a dozen, that I know here, who take an English paper; it is a remarkable thing that they are nearly all Irish and Scotch, and have baths."

[1] Of this same American a tale is told which might, I think, had she known it, have mitigated Martin's disapproval. One of the more futile of his pupils showed him a landscape that she had painted. He regarded it for some time in silence, then he said:

"Did you see it like that?"

"Oh yes, Mr. L——!" twittered the pupil.

"And did you feel it like that?"

"Oh yes, Mr. L——, indeed I did!"

"Wal," said Mr. L——, smoothly, "the next time you see and feel like that, *don't paint!*"

CHAPTER XXIV

HORSES AND HOUNDS

With Flurry's Hounds, and you our guide,
We learned to laugh until we cried;
Dear Martin Ross, the coming years
Find all our laughter lost in tears.

—*Punch*, Jan. 19, 1916.

I HAVE thought of leaving it to our books to express and explain the part that hunting has played in Martin's life and mine; but when I remember (to quote once again those much-quoted lines) how much of the fun that we have had in our lives has been "owed to horse and hound," I feel an acknowledgment more direct and deliberate is due.

Almost the first thing that I can remember is the duplicity of my grandfather on my behalf in the matter of the hounds. He had been forbidden by his doctor to hunt; he had also been forbidden by the ladies of his household to permit the junior lady of that establishment, then aged five, to "go anywhere *near* the hounds." None the less, by a succession of remarkable accidents, not wholly disconnected with the fact that my grandfather had had the West Carbery hounds himself at one time and knew the country as well as the foxes did, he and I rarely missed a sight of them, and, on one memorable day, we cut in at a moment that bestowed upon us the finish of the run

and gained for me the brush. Absurdly bestowed, of course, but none the less glorious. The glory was dimmed a little by the fact that just after the presentation had been made my pony rolled, and a kind but tactless young man picked me up, like a puppy, and deposited me on my saddle, instead of mounting me as a gentleman should mount a lady. Nevertheless, I can confidently say that the proudest moment of my life was when I rode home with the brush.

My grandfather had hunted for a few seasons, when he was a young man, with what he, after the fashion of his day, called "the Dook of Beaufort's" hounds. He brought over a West Carbery horse, Diamond by name, a flea-bitten grey, and he earned for his owner the honourable title of "That damned Irishman." There is an old saying, "Nothing stops a Carbery man," and I imagine that the title aforesaid was applied with special fervour when the hunt went into the stone-wall country and Diamond began to sing songs of Zion and enjoy himself.

Hunting in West Carbery died out when I was a child, and the hounds were in abeyance for many years. Political troubles and bad times generally had led to their temporary extinction, and such hunting as came my way was in countries far from Carbery. Of the Masters of those days not one is now left. Hard goers and good sportsmen all round, and men too, many of them, of the old-fashioned classical culture. It is told of the last of that old brigade that during his last illness, a short time before he died, he said he supposed he "would d——d soon be shooting woodcock in Mars with Johnny B." (who was another of the same heroic mould), and if his supposition was justified, the Martian cock are likely to have had a bad time of it.

In 1891 my brother Aylmer restarted the old West

Carbery foxhounds, and then indeed did that madness of the chase, of which we have treated in "Dan Russel the Fox," descend upon us all. The first step in the affair was the raising, by means of concerts, public meetings, and mendicancy generally, a sum of money; the second was the purchase of a small pack from a private owner. These arrived with the title of "B.'s Rioters," and it is not too much to say that we rioted with them. It was, at first, all thoroughly informal and entirely delightful; later we fell into the grip of professionals, who did things as they should be done, and inflicted decorum upon us and the Rioters. The days of "Danny-O" and "Patsey Sweeny" passed, and the thrill died out of the diaries.

No longer are such items to be found as:

"Jack, Martin, and I took hounds to walk out with Patsey. Came on a hare." (This means that we went to look for a hare, ardently and with patience.) "Ran her for two and a half hours, all on our own miserable legs. Lost her in darkness. All pretty tired when we got back to kennels."

Or again. "Aylmer, Martin, and I went to kennels and christened the new draft, seven and a half couple of puppies. Coupled them and tried to take them out. The instant they were coupled they went stark mad and fought, mostly in the air; it looked like a battle of German heraldic eagles."

Other entries, which I decline to make public, relate to drags, disreputably laid, for disreputable reasons, and usually dedicated to English visitors, who did not always appreciate the attention.

My brother kept the hounds going for twelve seasons, during which we had the best of sport and learned to know the people and the country in the way that hunting alone can teach. After his long term

THE WEST CARBERY HOUNDS. M. J. R.

of office had ended, a farmer summed up for me the opinion that the country people had of him :

" He was the King of the world for them ! If he rode his horses into their beds they'd ask no better ! "

When he gave up in 1903, I followed him in the Mastership, which I have held, with an interval of four years, ever since. " Of all sitivations under the sun, none is more enviable or 'onerable than that of a Master of fox'ounds," Mr. Jorrocks observes, and further states that his " 'ead is nothin' but one great bump of 'untin' ! " I do not say that things have gone as far as this with me, but I will admit that the habit of keeping hounds is a very clinging one.

Many congratulations and much encouragement were bestowed upon me when I bought the hounds and took office, but warnings were not wanting. A friend, himself a Master of Hounds, wrote to me and said that it required " the patience of Job, and the temper of a saint, and the heart of a lion, to navigate a pack of foxhounds," and there have undoubtedly been occasions when for me the value of all these attributes was conspicuously proved by their absence at need.

If Mr. Jorrocks's estimate of the job is to be accepted, it is, from my point of view, chiefly in the kennels that the " enviable " aspect of mastership is to be found. I have spoken of three hounds, specially beloved, but the restriction of the number is only made out of consideration for those readers whose patience could stand no more. It is customary to despise the ignorant and unlearned in hound matters, but I have too often witnessed their sufferings to do aught save pity. To be a successful kennel visitor is given to so few. I have sometimes wondered which is most to be pitied, the sanguine huntsman, drawing his hounds one by one, in the ever-renewed

belief that he has found an admirer who knows how to admire, ending in bitterness and "letting them all come"; or the straining visitor, groping for the right word and praising the wrong hound. In one of Mr. Howell's books there is a certain "Tom Corey," who, though without a sense of humour, yet feels a joke in his heart from sheer lovableness. Even so did one of my aunts feel the hounds in her heart. Her sympathy and admiration enchanted my huntsman; he waxed more and more eloquent, and all would have been well had not "Tatters," a broken-haired fox-terrier, come into view.

"Oh!" exclaimed my Aunt S. rapturously, "what a darling little hound! I like it the best of them all!"

The disaster of a sigh too much, or a kiss too long, was never more tragically exemplified.

Subsequently she was heard describing her visit to the kennels; amongst other details she noted with admiration that L., the huntsman, and I knew the name of each hound.

"Edith is wonderful!" she said fervently, "she knows them *all!* If she wants one of them she just says, 'Here, Spot! Spot! Spot!'"

One gathered that the response to this classic hound name was instant.

Huntsmen have, in their way, almost as much to put up with as writers in the matter of cross-examination.

"And do you *really* know them? *Each* one?"

"And have they *all* got names?"

Then, upon explanation that there are enough names to go round, "And do you absolutely *know* them all?"

L., like Tom Corey, was unsustained by a sense of humour, and nothing but his lovableness enabled

him to fulfil that most difficult of Christian duties, to suffer fools gladly.

"Lor, Master, what silly questions they do ask!" he has permitted himself to say sometimes, when all was over. Yet, as I have said, sympathy should also be reserved for the inquirers. Insatiable as is the average mother for admiration of her young, she is as water unto wine compared with a huntsman and his hounds. Few people have put a foot deeper into trouble than I have myself, on the occasion of a visit to a very smart pack in England. I had, I hope, come respectably through a minute inspection of the hounds, and, that crucial trial safely past, the Queen of Sheba tottered, spent, but thankful for preservation, into the saddle-room, a vast and impressive apartment, there to be shown, and to express fitting admiration for, the trophies of the chase that adorned it. All round the panelled walls were masks, beautifully mounted, grinning and snarling over their silver name-plates. And I, accustomed to the long-jawed wolves that we call foxes in West Carbery, said in all good faith,

"What a number of cubs you have killed!"

The Master said, icily, that those were foxes, and the subject dropped.

Poor L. is dead now; a keener little huntsman never blew a horn, but he never quite succeeded in hitting it off with the farmers and country people; they were incomprehensible to each other, alike in speech and in spirit. L. despised anyone who got out of bed later than 5 A.M., winter and summer alike, and would boast of having got all his work done before others were out of their beds, which was trying to people with whom early rising is not a foible. He found it impossible to divine the psychology of the lads who jovially told him that they had

seen the fox and had "cruisted him well" (which meant that they had stoned him back into covert when he tried to break). It is hard to kill foxes in Carbery, and L. was much exercised about the frequent disappointments that them pore 'ounds had to endure as a result of bad earth-stopping. One wet day, on arriving at the meet, I found him in a state of high indignation. The covert we were to draw was a very uncertain find, and it transpired that L. had secretly arranged with the farmer on whose land it was, that he was to turn down a bagman in it. "He said he could get one easy, and you'd 'ardly think it, Master, but the feller tells me now it was a tame fox of 'is own he was going to turn down, and now he says to me he thinks the day is too wet to bring out such a little pet! 'A *little pet!*' 'e says!"

The human voice is incapable of an accent of more biting scorn than L. imparted to his as he spoke these words. I am unable to determine if L.'s wrath were attributable to the farmer's heartlessness in having been willing to hunt a tame fox, or to his affectation of consideration for it, or whether it was the result of rage and disappointment on behalf of the hounds. I incline to the last theory.

I have hunted with a good many packs in Ireland of very varying degrees of grandeur, and Ireland is privileged in unconventionalism; nevertheless, it was in England, with a highly fashionable Leicestershire pack, that I was privileged to behold an incident that might have walked out of the pages of Charles Lever into the studio of Randolph Caldecott.

I had brought over a young mare to ride and sell; she and I were the guests of two of the best riders in England and the nicest people in the world (which is sufficient identification for those that know the

couple in question). It was my first day with an English pack and it had been a good one. Hunting for the day was at an end, and we had turned our horses for home, when the fight flared up. High on the ridge of a hill, dark against a frosty evening sky, I can still see the combatants, with their whips in the air, laying in to each other happily and wholeheartedly for quite a minute or two, before peacemakers came rushing up, and what had been a pretty, old-fashioned quarrel was patted down into a commonplace, to be dealt with by the family solicitors.

I had had my own little *fracas* that day. The young mare was hot, and took me over a place which included a hedge, and a wet ditch, and an old gentleman who had waited in the ditch while his horse went on. I feared, from what I could gather as I proceeded on my way, that he was annoyed, but as I had caught sight of him just in time to tell him to lie down, I could not feel much to blame.

I had an English huntsman for two or three seasons whose keenness was equalled (rather unexpectedly) by his piety. He was an extraordinarily hard man to go ("No silly joke of a man to ride," as I have heard it put), and his excitement when hounds began to run would release itself in benedictions.

"Gawd bless you, Governor boy! Gawd bless you, Rachel my darling! Come along, Master! Come along! He's away, thank Gawd! He's away!"

There was a day when hounds took us across a bad bit of bog and there checked. Harry, the whipper-in, also an Englishman, and not learned in bogs, got in rather deep. His horse got away from him, and while he was floundering, waist-deep in black and very cold bog-water, he saw the hunted fox creeping into a patch of furze and rocks. He holloa'd to G., who galloped up as near as was advisable.

"Where is 'e, 'Arry?" he roared.

"Be'ind o' them rocks 'e went. I wouldn't 'a seen 'im only for gettin' into this somethin' 'ole," replied Harry, dragging himself out of the slough. "Can't ye catch me 'orse?"

"That's all right, 'Arry! You wouldn't 'a viewed 'im only for the 'ole. All things works together for good with them that loves Gawd!"

With which G. laid on his hounds, and left Harry to comfort himself with this reflection and to catch his horse when he could.

G.'s word in season reminds me of a prayer that my nephew, Paddy Coghill (whose infant devotions have already been referred to), offered on his sixth birthday, one "Patrick's Day in the morning."

"And oh, Lord God, make it a good day for hunting, and make me sit straight on Kelpie, and show me how to hold my reins."

He subsequently went to the meet, himself and pony so covered with shamrock that Tim C. (the then huntsman) told him the goats would eat him. I cannot now vouch for the first clause of the petition having been granted, but the R.F.A. Riding School has guaranteed that the latter ones were fulfilled.

It is impossible for me to write a chapter about hunting without speaking of Bridget, a little grey mare who is bracketed with Candy, "Equal First." I have been so happy as to have owned many good hunters. Lottery, by Speculation, a chestnut mare who died untimely, staked by a broken bough in a gap (and, strangely enough, her brother, "Spec," is the only other horse who has in this country, thank heaven, had the same hard fate); Tarbrush, a black but comely lady, of whom it was said that she was "a jumper in airnest, who would face up and beyond anything she could see," and would,

if perturbed in temper, go very near to "kicking the stars out of the sky"; Little Tim, a pocket Hercules, worthy to be named with George Borrow's tremendous "Irish cob"; and Kitty, whose flippancy is such that it has been said to have consoled the country boys for a blank day. "They were well satisfied," said a competent judge, "Kitty filled their eye."

But, as with Candy among dogs, so, among horses, Bridget leads, the rest nowhere. Her father was a thoroughbred horse, her mother a Bantry mountain pony. She herself was very little over 15 hands 1 inch, and she succeeded in combining the cunning and goat-like activity of the spindle side of the house with all the heroic qualities of her father's family.

"She has a plain head," said a rival horse-coper, who had been so unfortunate as not to have seen her before I did, "but that suits the rest of her!"

I suppose it was a plain head, but anyone who had sat behind it and seen its ears prick at sight of the coming "lep" would not think much of its plainness. I hunted her for ten seasons, and she never gave me a fall that was not strictly necessary. Since her retirement from the Hunt stables she has acted as nursery governess to a succession of rising riders, and at the age of seventeen she carried Martin for a season, and thought little, with that featherweight, of keeping where both of them loved to be, at "the top of the Hunt."

The West Carbery Hunt was once honoured by a visit from an American hunting woman, a lady who had been sampling various British hunts and who was a critic whose good opinion was worth having. She was an accomplished rider and a very hard goer, and her enjoyment of such sport as we were able

to show her was eminently gratifying. She made, however, one comment upon the country which has not been forgotten. We had a ringing fox who rather overdid his anxiety to show the visitor a typical West Carbery line. He took us round and about a particularly typical hill more often than was requisite, and he declined to demonstrate the fact that we possessed any grass country, or any sound and civilised banks. Our visitor had the hunt, such as it was, with the best, and spoke with marked enthusiasm of the agility of our horses. Later I heard her discussing the events of the day.

"We jumped one place," said my visitor, "and I said to myself, 'Well, I suppose that never on God's earth shall I see a thing like that again!' And *after* that," she went on, "we jumped it five times."

I might prolong this chapter indefinitely with stories of hunting; of old times in Meath, with Captain "Jock" Trotter, or Mr. John Watson, when Martin and I hunted there with our cousins, Ethel and Jim Penrose; of characteristically blazing gallops with the Galway Blazers, in recent years, ably piloted by Martin's eldest brother, Jim Martin; of many a good day at home in our own country. But an end must be made, and this chapter may fitly close with a letter of Martin's. The hunt of which she writes did not take place with the West Carbery, but the country she describes is very similar to ours, and the incidents might as well have occurred here.

V. F. M. to the Hon. Mrs. Campbell. (December.)

"We had an unusual sort of hunt the other day, when the hounds, unattended, put a fox out of a very thick wood and up a terrible hill; when we caught them up there ensued much scrambling and climbing; there were even moments when, having

a bad head, I was extremely frightened, and, in the middle of all this, a fallow doe joined up from behind, *through the riders*, and got away over the hill-top. To the doe the hounds cheerfully attached themselves, and we had much fun out of it, and it was given to us to see, as they went away, that one hound had a rabbit in his mouth. It is not every day that one hunts a fox, a deer and a rabbit at the same moment. It was like old hunting scenes in tapestry. C., the old huntsman, and his old white horse went like smoke in the boggy, hilly country. It was pleasant to see, and the doe beat the hounds handsomely and got back safely to the wood, to which, in the meantime, the fox had strolled back by the avenue.

"Last week we drew another of the minor mountains of this district, and the new draft got away like lightning after a dog! who fled over a spur of the hill for his paternal home. All went out of sight, but the row continued. C. sat and blew his horn, and the poor Whip nearly burst himself trying to get round them. Then they reappeared, half the pack by this time, going like mad, and *no* dog in front of them! We then had a vision of an old hump-backed man with a scythe, like the conventional figure of 'Time,' set up against a furzy cliff, mowing at the hounds in the full belief that they were going to pull him down. They swept on up the hill and disappeared, having, in the excursion with the dog, put up a fox! E. had divined it and got away with them. By cleaving to C. I caught them all right, otherwise I should have been left with everyone else at the bottom of the hill, saying funny things about the dog. It was touching to hear C. saying to E. in triumph, 'Where are your English hounds now, Miss?' She had praised the United, and this sank into the soul of C., and indeed it was his

beloved black-and-tan Kerry beagles and Scalliwags who were in front, and the rest not in sight. The new English draft were probably occupied in crossing themselves instead of the country—for which I don't blame them. Personally, however, I feel as if an open grass country, and a smart pack, and a sound horse, would be very alarming."

The reference to " a sound horse " may be explained by the fact that owing to her exceeding short sight we insisted on her being mounted only on old and thoroughly reliable hunters, who were able to take care of her as well as of themselves; it need hardly be added that such will not invariably pass a vet.

It was ten years from the date of her bad accident before she was able to get out hunting again; this chapter may well end with what she then wrote to Mrs. Campbell.

" I have once more pottered forth with the hounds, and have had some real leps, and tasted the wine of life again."

* * * * * *

There are some whose names will never be forgotten in Carbery who will drink no more with us what Martin Ross has called the Wine of Life. For her that cup is set aside, and with her now are three of the best of the lads whose pride and pleasure it used to be to wear the velvet cap of the hunt servant, and to turn hounds in West Carbery. Gallant soldiers, dashing riders, dear boys; they have made the supreme sacrifice for their country, and they will ride no more with us.

The hunt goes on; season follows season; the heather dies on the hills and the furze blossoms again in the spring. Other boys will come out to follow hounds, and learn those lessons that hunting

best can teach, but there will never be better than those three: Ralph and Gerald Thornycroft, and Harry Becher.

"Bred to hunting they was," said the old huntsman, who loved them, and has now, like them, crossed that last fence of all, "every one o' them. Better gentlemen to cross a country I never see."

CHAPTER XXV

"THE IRISH R.M."

As had been the case with "The Real Charlotte," so were we also in Paris when "Some Experiences of an Irish R.M."—to give the book its full and cumbrous title—was published by Messrs. Longman in November, 1899.

It was probably better for us both that we should be where, beyond the voices, there was peace, but it meant that most of the fun of publishing a book was lost to us. The thrill, for example, of buying a chance paper, and lighting upon a review in it. One might buy all the papers in Paris without a moment of anxiety.

After a time, however, congested envelopes of "press cuttings," mostly of a reassuring character, began to arrive. Press-cuttings, received *en gros*, are liable to induce feelings of indigestion, and with their economy of margin and general suggestion of the waste-paper basket, their tendency is to crush the romance out of reviews; but Martin and I found them good reading. And gradually, letters from unknown readers began to reach us. Pathetic letters, one from "an Irish Exile," thanking us for "a Whiff of Irish air," another from Australia, proudly claiming possession of "Five drops of Irish blood," and offering them as an excuse for "troubling us with thanks." Serious

inquiries, beginning, in one instance, "Dear Sirs or Ladies, or Sir or Lady,"—as to whether we were men or women, or both. A friendly writer, in America, informed us that legend was already "crystalising all over us." "There is a tradition in our neighbourhood that you are ladies—also that you live at Bally something—that you are Art Students in Paris—that you are Music Students in Germany . . . but my writing is not to inquire into your identity—or how you collaborate . . . a cumulative debt of gratitude fell due . . ." The writer then proceeded to congratulate us on "having accomplished the rare feat of being absolutely modern, yet bearing no date," and ended by saying "I think the stories will be as good in ten years or fifty (which probably interests you less) as they are to-day." A kind forecast, that still remains to be verified. The same writer, who was herself one of the trade, went on to say that she "*knew* that the Author is not insulted or aggrieved on hearing that perfect strangers are eagerly awaiting the next book, or re-reading the last with complete enjoyment," and this chapter may be taken as a confirmation of the truth of what she said. One may often smile at the form in which, sometimes, the approval is conveyed, but I welcome this opportunity of thanking those wonderful people, who have taken the trouble to write to Martin and me, often from the ends of the earth, to tell us that our writing had given them pleasure; not more, I think, than their letters have given us, so we can cry quits over the transaction.

We have been told, and the story is well authenticated, of a young lady who invariably slept with two copies of the book (like my aunt and her "*Sommeliers*"), one on each side of her, so that on whichever side she faced on waking, she could find instant refreshment. An assurance of almost excessive appreciation

came from America, informing us that we "had Shakspere huddled into a corner, screaming for mercy." We were told of a lady (of the bluest literary blood) who had classified friends from acquaintances by finding out if they had read and appreciated "The Real Charlotte" or no, and who now was unable to conceive how she had ever existed without the assistance of certain quotations from "The R.M." Perhaps one of the most pleasing of these tales was one of a man who said (to a faithful hearer) "First I read it at full speed, because I couldn't stop, and then I read it *very* slowly, chewing every word; and then I read it a third time, dwelling on the bits I like best; and then, and *not* till then, thank Heaven! I was told it was written by two women!"

An old hunting man, a friend and contemporary of Surtees and Delmé Radcliffe, wrote to us saying that he was "The Evangelist of the Irish R.M. It is the only doctrine that I preach . . . It is ten years since I dropped upon it by pure accident, and, like Keats, in his equally immortal sonnet—

> 'Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken,'

I am so deeply grieved that you cannot hunt. I can sympathise. It is sixty years since I began hunting, and I know how you must miss it. Now you realise the truth of John Jorrocks. 'For hunting is like the air we breathe, if we have it not, we die.' But don't do that. Ever yours, etc. etc."

We have had many letters containing inquiries of a sort that taxed both memory and invention to find replies to them. Bewildering demands for explanations, philological, etymological, zoological, of such statements as "The Divil in the Wild Woods wouldn't content him," or Flurry Knox's refusal to "be seen

AT BUNALUN. "GONE TO GROUND." A. C.

WAITING FOR THE TERRIERS. A. C.

dead at a pig fair " in certain articles of attire. Why a pig fair ? Why dead ? Why everything ? Martin's elucidation of the pig fair problem appeared in the *Spectator*, included in a letter from the inquirer, " G.," and is as follows :

" I have never given a necktie to a male friend, or even enemy ; but a necktie was once given to me. I showed it to a person whose opinion on such matters I revere. He said at once, ' I would not be seen dead in it at a pig-fair.' The matter of the tie ended there ; to use the valuable expression of the wife of the male friend, (in connection with a toy that might possibly prove injurious to her young,) I ' gradually threw it away.' That was my first experience of the pig-fair trope, and I have never ceased to find comfort in it, nor ever questioned its completeness. I am aware that nothing, presumably, will matter to me when I am dead, yet, casting my mind forward, I do not wish the beholder of my remains, casting his eye backward, to be scandalised by my taste in ties, or other accompaniments, while I was alive. I do not myself greatly care about being alive at a pig-fair, neither is it an advantage, socially or otherwise, to be dead there. Yet this odium might be enhanced, could even be transcended, in the eye of the beholder, by the infamy of my necktie. To this point I have treated the beholder as a person able to appreciate the discredit, not only of my necktie, but also of being dead at a pig-fair. There remains, however, and in a highly intensive manner, the pig-fair itself. We trust and believe the pig-jobber is critical about pigs ; but we do not expect from him fastidiousness in artistic and social affairs. He will not, we hope, realise the discredit of being dead at a pig-fair, but there can be neckties at which he will draw the line. Considering, therefore, the disapproba-

tion of the pig-jobber, joined to that of the other beholders, and finding that fore-knowledge of the callousness of death could not allay my sense of these ignominies, I gradually threw away the necktie."

I trust "G." will permit me to quote also the following from his letter.

"As reference has been made to the 'R.M.' your readers will be amused to hear that a French sportsman who had asked the name of a good sporting novel, and had been recommended the work in question, said with some surprise, 'But I did not think such things existed in Ireland.' He imagined the title to be 'Some Reminiscences of an Irish Harem.'"

A leading place among the communications and appreciations that we received about our books was taken by what we were accustomed to call Medical Testimonials. The number of quinzies and cases of tonsilitis that Major Yeates has cured, violently, it is true, but effectually, the cases of prostration after influenza, in which we were assured he alone had power to rouse and cheer the sufferer, cannot possibly be enumerated. We have sometimes been flattered into the hope that we were beginning to rival the Ross "Fluit-player" of whom it was said, "A man in deep concumption From death he would revive."

We had but one complaint, and that was from a ccusin, who said it had reduced her to "Disabling laughter," which, "remembering the awful warning, 'laugh, and grow F——!'" she had tried her utmost to restrain.

The envelopes of press cuttings became more and more congested as the months went on, and the "R.M." continued his course round the world; and, thanks to his being, on the whole, an inoffensive person, he was received with more kindness than we had ever dared to hope for. There were, as far as I

can remember, but few rose leaves with crumples in them, and even they had their compensations, as, I think, the following sample crumple will sufficiently indicate. I am far from wishing to hold this pronouncement up to derision. There was a great deal more of it than appears here, which, unfortunately, I have not space to quote. We found many of its strictures instructive and bracing, and the suffering that pulses in the final paragraph bears the traces of a genuine emotion.

"The stories were originally published in a magazine, and would be less monotonous and painful, no doubt, if read separately, and in small doses . . . The picture they give of Irish life is . . . so depressingly squalid and hopeless . . . The food is appallingly bad, and the cooking and service, if possible, worse. No one in the book, high or low, does a stroke of work, unless shady horse-selling and keeping dirty public houses can be said to be doing work. . . . On the whole, the horses and hounds are far more important than the human beings, and the stables and kennels are only a degree less dilapidated and disgusting than the houses. Not a trace of romance, seriousness, or tenderness, disturbs the uniform tone of the book.

"Such is the picture of our country, given, I believe, by two Irish ladies. One, at least, is Irish —Miss Martin, a niece of the Honourable Mrs. P. A more unfeminine book I have never perused, or one more devoid of any sentiment of refinement, for even men who write horsey novels preserve some tinge of romance in their feelings towards women which these ladies are devoid of. A complete hardness pervades their treatment of the female as of the male characters."

It is seventeen years since we first perused this

melancholy indictment. Is it too late to do one act of justice and to restore to the reviewer one illusion? Martin Ross cannot claim the relationship assigned to her; the Honourable Mrs. P. leaves the court without a stain on her character.

Among the best and most faithful of the friends of the R.M., we make bold to count the Army. After the South African War, we were shown a letter in which a Staff-officer had said that he "had worn out three copies of the 'Irish R.M.' during the War, but it had preserved for him his reason, which would otherwise have been lost." Another wrote to tell us of the copy of the book that had been found in General de Wet's tent, on one of the many occasions when that stout campaigner had got up a little earlier than had been expected. Yet a third officer, no less than a Director of Military Intelligence, said that a statue should be erected in honour of the "R.M." "For services rendered during the War." And, as Mr. Belloc has sung, "Surely the Tartar should know!"

Much later came a letter from Northern Nigeria, telling us that "the book was ripping," apologising for "frightful cheek" in writing, ending with the statement that "even if we were annoyed," the writer was, "at any rate, a long way off!"

In very truth we were not annoyed. We have had letters that filled us with an almost shamed thankfulness that we should have been able, with such play-boys as Flurry Knox, and "Slipper," and the rest, to give what seemed to be a real lift to people who needed it; and, since 1914, it is not easy to express what happiness it has brought us both to hear, as we have often heard, that the various volumes of the R.M.'s adventures had done their share in bringing moments of laughter, and, perhaps, of oblivion for a while to their surroundings, to the

fighters in France and in all those other cruel places, where endurance and suffering go hand in hand, and the lads lay down their lives with a laugh.

Nothing, I believe, ever gave Martin more pleasure than that passages from the "Irish R.M." should have been included among the Broad Sheets that the *Times* sent out to the soldiers. It was in the last summer of her life, little as we thought it, that this honour was paid to our stories, and had she been told how brief her time was to be, and been asked to choose the boon that she would like best, I believe that to be numbered among that elect company of consolers was what she would most gladly have chosen.

A little book was sent to me, not long ago, which was published in the spring of this year, 1917. It gives an account, worthy in its courage and simplicity of the brilliant and gallant young life that it commemorates. In it is told how Gilbert Talbot, of the Rifle Brigade, "began the plan of reading aloud in the men's rest times, and we heard from many sources what the fun was, and the shouts of laughter, from his reading aloud of 'Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.' 'Philippa's first Foxhunt' was a special success." And in his last entry in his diary, he himself tells of having "read one of the old R.M. stories aloud," and that it was "a roaring success."

Yet one other story, and one that touches the fount of tears. It was written to me by one who knew and loved Martin; one whose husband had been killed in the war, and who wrote of her eldest son,

"I want to tell you that the R.M. helped me through what would have been D——'s twenty-first birthday yesterday. I know Violet would have been glad."

I believe that she knows these things, and I am quite sure that she is glad.

CHAPTER XXVI

OF GOOD TIMES

In a Swiss Valley.

Silver and blue the hills, and blue the infinite sky,
And silver sweet the straying sound of bells
Among the pines ; their tangled music tells
Where the brown cattle wander. From on high
A glacier stream leaps earthward, passionately,
A white soul flying from a wizard's spells.
And still above the pines one snow-drift dwells,
Winter's last sentinel, left there to die.
From the deep valley, while the waterfall
Charms memory to sleep, I see the snow
Sink, conquered, on the pine trees' steady spears.
A waft of flowers comes to me. Dearest, all
Our happy days throng back, and with the flow
Of that wild stream, there mingle alien tears.

* * * * *

The effort of writing the twelve "R.M." stories against time, and before she had even begun to recover from the effects of the hunting accident, told upon Martin more severely than we could either of us have believed possible. For the following four years, 1900 to 1903, it was impossible for her to undertake any work that would demand steady application, and it was out of the question to bind ourselves to any date for anything. In looking over our records, the fact that has throughout been the most outstanding is,

how seldom she was quite free from suffering of some kind or other. For a creature who adored activity of any kind, and whose exquisite lightness of poise and perfectness of physical equipment predisposed her for any form of sport, her crippling short sight was a most cruel handicap, and in nothing was the invincible courage, patience, and sweetness of her nature so demonstrated as in the fortitude with which she accepted it.

It is said that blind people develop a sixth sense, and it was a truism with us that Martin saw and knew more of any happening, at any entertainment, than any of the rest of us, endowed though we were with sight like hawks, but unprovided with her perception, and concentration, and intuition. There have been times when her want of sight supported her, as when, at a very big Admiralty House Dinner (no matter where), an apple pie that had made the tour of the table in vain was handed to her. Unaware of its blighted past she partook, and slowly disposed of it, talking to her man the while. It was not until she was going home that a justly scandalised sister was able to demand an explanation as to why she had brought the table to a standstill, even as Joshua held up the sun at Ajalon.

But more often—far more often—it has betrayed her. Once, after a visit at a country house, the party, a large one, stood round the motor in farewell, and she, a little late for the train, as was her custom, motor-veiled, and deserted by her eye-glasses, hurriedly shook hands with all and sundry, and ended with the butler. She could never remember how far the salutation had been carried, or the point at which her eyes were spiritually opened. It was a searing memory, but she said she thought and hoped that, as with the Angel of the Darker Drink, she did not, at that last dread

moment, shrink. But, she added, undoubtedly the butler did.

No one was ever such a comrade on an expedition, and many such have she and I made together. Times of the best, when we went where we would, and did what pleased us most, and had what I hold to be, on the whole, the best company in the world, that of painting people. (Yet I admit that a spice of other artists adds flavour.) Even during those years of comparative invalidism, after the traitor "Dervish" had so nearly crushed her life out of her, Martin never surrendered to the allied forces of *malaise*, and those attractions of idleness and comfort which may be symbolised in "The Sofa."

She was on a horse again before many, in her case, would have been off the sofa, and when, fighting through phalanxes of friends and doctors, she went hunting again, her nerve was what it ever had been, of steel. We went to Achill Island in one of those summers, to a hotel where "The Sofa" was practically non-existent (being invariably used as a reserve bed for bagmen), and the unpunctuality of the meals might possibly have been intended to evoke an appetite that would ignore their atrocity. In this it failed, but it evoked various passages in "Some Irish Yesterdays," and thus may be credited with having assisted us to get better dinners elsewhere.

We went to London, and stayed at the Bolton Studios, that strange, elongated habitation, that is like nothing so much as a corridor train in a nightmare. There, one night, Martin got ill, and I had to summon, post haste, the nearest doctor. He came, and was an Irishman, and was as clever as Irish doctors often are, and as unconventional. He is dead now, so I may mention that when, in the awful, echoing corridor, at dead of night, the delicate subject of his fee was

broached, we discovered that there was an unprocurable sixpence between us.

He eyed me and said,

" I'll toss ye for the sixpence ! "

" Done ! " called Martin, feebly, from within.

The doctor and I tossed, double or quits, sudden death. I won. And there came a faint cock-crow from the inner chamber.

That year she wrote a sketch called " A Patrick's Day Hunt," and I drew the illustrations for it. It was published as a large coloured picture-book, by Constable & Co., and was very well reviewed. The story is supposed to be told by a countryman to a friend, and is a remarkable *tour de force*, both in idiom and in realising the countryman point of view. We were afraid that it might be found too subtle a study of dialect for the non-Irish reader, so we were the more pleased when we were told of an English Quaker family, living in the very heart of their native country, who, every day, directly after prayers, read aloud a portion of " A Patrick's Day Hunt."

(In this connection I will quote a fragment of a letter which bears indirectly on the same point.)

E. Œ. S. to V. F. M. (Spring, 1903.)

" ——I have also heard of a very smart lady, going to Ireland for the first time, who invested in an R.M., saying, ' I have bought this book. I want to see how one should talk to the Irish.'

" ' Blasht your Sowl ! ' replied my friend Slipper.

" ' May the Divil crack the two legs undher ye ! ' (See any page, anywhere, in the Irish R.M.)"

Another effort of what I may call the Sofa period was an account of a case that we had been privileged to see and hear in a County Galway Petty Sessions Court.

We called it " An Irish Problem " ; it appeared in the *National Review*, and is now reprinted in " All on the Irish Shore." This book, which is a collection of short stories and articles, was published by Longmans, Green & Co. in March, 1903. The stories, etc., in it had all appeared in various serials, and one, " An Irish Miracle," has called forth many letters and inquiries. Even during the present year of 1917 I have had a letter from a lady in Switzerland, asking for information as to how to use the charm.

In a letter from myself to Martin, written during a visit to an English country house, I have come upon a reference to it. " They have been reading ' All on the Irish Shore ' here. It was nobly typical of Colonel D. (an old friend) to read ' An Irish Miracle ' in silence, and then ask, grimly, how much of it was true. Nothing more. There is wonderful strength of character in such conduct—beyond most Irish people. It is all part of the splendid English gift of not caring if they are agreeable or no. Just think of the engaging anxiety of the middle-class Irishman to be *simpatica* to his company ! "

I may here state, with my hand, so to speak, on my heart, that there *is* a charm, an actual form of words which may be divulged only by " *a her to a him ; or a him to a her.*" It is of the highest piety, being based on the teaching of the Gospels, and should be used with reverence and conviction. I have heard of two occasions, and know of one, on which it took effect. Unfortunately it cannot be used in healing a horse, and whoever does so, loses henceforth the power of employing it successfully ; more than this I cannot say. I learnt it in the Co. Meath, and those who would " Know my Celia's Charms," or any other charms, from " The Cure for a Worm in the Heart," to " A Remedy for the Fallen Palate," to say nothing of the

Curing of Warts, and such small deer, are recommended to prosecute their inquiries in the Royal County.

In October, 1902, it was decreed that Martin should try what a rest cure would do for her. During her incarceration, and in the spring of 1903, I drew and wrote "Slipper's A. B. C. of Fox Hunting," which materialised as a large picture-book; it was published by Messrs. Longman, and I dedicated it, in a financial as well as a literary sense, to the West Carbery Foxhounds, of which pack, in the same spring, I became the Master.

It was while we were at Aix, that June, that we disinterred "The Irish Cousin," and prepared it for a renewal of existence under the auspices of Messrs. Longman. Shuddering, we combed out youthful redundancies and intensities, and although we found it impossible to deal with it as drastically as we could have wished, having neither time nor inclination to re-write it, we gave it a handling that scared it back to London as purged and chastened as a small boy after his first term at a public school. During these early years of the century, my sister and I, with a solid backing from our various relations, instituted a choral class in the village of Castle Townshend. It flourished for several years; we discovered no phenomenal genius, but we did undoubtedly find a great deal of genuine musical feeling. It is worth mentioning that, in our experience, the gift of untrained Irish singers is rhythm. If once the measure were caught, and the "beat" of the stick felt, an inherent sense of time kept the choir moving with the precision that is so delightful a feature of their dancing of jigs and reels. Some pleasant voices we found, and it was noteworthy that the better and the more classical the music that we tried to teach, the more popular it was. Hardly any of them could read music, and it was the task of

those who could to impart the alto, tenor, and bass of the glees to the class, by the arduous method of singing each part to its appropriate victims until exhaustion intervened. Once learnt, the iron memories of our people held the notes secure, but I shall not soon forget how one of my cousins spent herself in the task of teaching to a new member, a young farm labourer, a tenor part. L.'s own voice was a rich and mellow contralto, and the remembrance of her deep, impassioned warblings, and of her pupil's random and bewildered bleatings, is with me still. Musical societies in small communities have precarious lives. Gradually our best singers left us, to be wasted as sailors, soldiers, servants, school teachers, and I only speak of the society now in order to justify and explain a letter of Martin's in which is described an experience that she owed to it.

V. F. M. to E. Œ. S. (Dublin, October (year uncertain).)

" Miss K. ceaselessly flits from Committee to Lecture and from Lecture to Convention, and would hound me to all. She is much wrapped up in the *Feis Ceoil*, of which a meeting, about Village Choral Societies, was held in the Mansion House on Friday. She begged me to go, and see the Lord Mayor preside, and hear much useful information, so, in the interests of the C.T. Choral Class I went. It was five o'clock before I approached, for the first time in my life, the portals of the Mansion House, and in the hall I could see nothing but a dirty bicycle and a little boy of about ten, who murmured that I was to write my name in a book, which I did with a greasy pencil from his own pocket. He told me that I was to go to the stairs and take the first to the left. I did so, and found myself in a pitch dark drawing-room. I returned to

the boy, who then told me to go *up* the stairs and turn to my left.

"I climbed two flights, of homely appearance, and found a quite dark landing at the top. As I stood uncertain, something stirred in the dark. It was very low and dwarfish, and my flesh crept; it said nothing, but moved past, no higher than my waist. It seemed, in the glimmer that came from the foot of the stairs, to be some awful little thing carrying a big bundle on its back or head. I shall never know more than this.

"There was light down a passage, and making for it I came to a room with little and big beds jammed up side by side, obviously a nursery. There was also a nurse. I murmured apologies and fled. The nurse, if it were indeed a nurse and not an illusion, took not the faintest notice. After various excursions round the dark landing, during which the conviction grew upon me that I was in a dream, I went back to the nursery passage and there met a good little slut-tweenie, without cap or apron, who took me downstairs and put me right for the meeting, which I entered in a state bordering on hysterics. That died away very soon under the influence of a very long speech about the hire of pianos. Very practical, but deadly. The room was interesting, panelled with portraits around, and the audience was scanty. . . . On the whole I think the information I obtained is entirely useless to you, but the mysterious life into which I stumbled was interesting, and had a pleasing Behind the Looking Glass bewilderment in it. . . . This morning I had a tooth out under gas. I am quite sure that all gassings and chloroformings are deeply uncanny. One dies, one goes off into dreadful vastness with one's astral body. That was the feeling. A poor little clinging ME, that first clung to the human

body that had decoyed it into B——'s chair, was cast loose from that, and then hung desperately on to an astral creature that was wandering in nightmare fastnesses,—(even as I wandered in the Mansion House) —quite separate—then that was lost, and that despairing ME said to itself quite plainly, 'I am forsaken—I have lost grip—I don't know how I am behaving—I must just endure.' Long afterwards came an effect as of the gold shower of a firework breaking silently over my head. Then appeared a radiant head in a fog—B——'s. Delightful relaxation of awful effort at self-control, and sudden realisation that the brute was out. Then the usual restoration to the world, tipped B——, put on my hat, and so home. I am sure these visions happen when one dies, and I am convinced of the existence of an innermost self, who just sits and holds on to the other two."

There came a spring when influenza fell upon Martin in London and could not be persuaded to release its grip of her throat. It was the second season after I took the hounds, and I was at home when, in the middle of March, Martin's doctor commanded her to lose no time in getting as far South as was convenient. I handed over the hounds to my brother Aylmer, and started for London at a moment's notice, with an empty mind and a Continental Bradshaw. In the train I endeavoured to fill the former with the latter, and, beginning with France, its towns and watering places, the third name on the list was Amélie-les-Bains. "Warm sulphur springs, which are successfully used in affections of the lungs. Known to the Romans. Thriving town, finely placed at the confluence of the rivers Tech and Mondony, at the foot of Fort-les-Bains. Owing to mildness of climate Baths open all the year. Living comparatively cheap."

The description was restrained but seductive, and I brooded over it all the way to Dublin.

It happened that one of the nice women, who are occasionally to be met with in trains, shared a carriage with me from Holyhead. To her I irrepressibly spoke of Amélie-les-Bains. It may or may not be believed that she had, only the previous day, studied with, she said, the utmost interest and admiration, a collection of photographs of Amélie, taken by a brother, or a sister, who had spent the time of their lives there. (I now believe that the nice woman was herself the human embodiment of Amélie.) I went next day to Cook's; they had never heard of Amélie. No one had ever heard of it, but I clung to Bradshaw and my nice woman, and in three days we started, in faith, for Amélie, Martin with bronchitis and a temperature, and I with tickets that could not be prevailed on to take us farther than Toulouse, and with more dubiety than I admitted. As I have, since then, met but one person who had ever heard of Amélie, it may not be considered officious if I mention that it is in South-Eastern France, Department Pyrenées Orientales, and that the Pyrenees stand round about it as the hills stand round about Jerusalem, and that "the confluence of the rivers Tech and Mondony" was all and more than Bradshaw had promised.

Martin and I have wandered through many byways of the world, and have loved most of them, but I think Amélie comes first in our affections. It is thirteen years, now, since we stayed at "Les Thermes Romains" Hotel. We went there because we liked the name; we stayed there for six delightful weeks, from the middle of March to the beginning of May, and irrational impulse was justified of her children.

One feature "Les Thermes Romains" possessed that I have never seen reduplicated. It was heated throughout by the Central Fires of Nature. From the heart of the mountains came the hot sulphurous streams that gurgled in the pipes in the passages, and filled hot water jugs, and hot water bottles, and regenerated the latter, if of indiarubber, restoring to them their infant purity of complexion in a way that gave us great hope for ourselves. Hannibal had passed through Amélie. He had built roads, and dammed the river, and given his name to the Grotte d'Annibale. After him the Romans had come, and had made the marble baths in which we also tried, not unsuccessfully, to wash away our infirmities, and after them the Moors had been there, and had built mysterious, windowless villages of pale stone, that hung in clusters, like wasps' nests, on the sides of the hills, and had left some strain of darkness and fineness in the people, as well as a superfluity of X's in the names of the places.

While we were at Les Thermes, two little Englishmen strayed in, accidentally, but all the other guests were French. Among them was an old gentleman who had been in his youth a *protégé* of Georges Sand. He sat beside Martin, and joined with Isidore, the old head-waiter, in seeing that she ate and drank of the best and the most typical "*du pays.*" "*C'est du pays, Mademoiselle!*" Isidore would murmur, depositing a preserved orange, like a harvest moon in syrup, upon her plate; while Monsieur P. would select the fattest of the olives and tenderest of the artichokes for "*Mees Violette.*" Monsieur P. was ten years in advance of his nation in liking and believing in English people. He told us that Georges Sand was the best woman in the world, the kindest, the cleverest, the most charming; he loved dogs;

"*Ah, ils sont meilleurs que nous!*" he said, with conviction, but he excepted Georges Sand and Mees Violette.

While we were at Amélie, we wrote the beginning of "Dan Russel the Fox," sitting out on the mountain side, amidst the marvellous heaths, and spurges, and flowers unknown to us, while the rivers Tech and Mondony stormed "in confluence" in the valley below us, and the pink mist of almond blossom was everywhere. Dan Russel progressed no farther than a couple of chapters and then retired to the shelf, where he remained until the spring of 1909 found us at Portofino with my sister and a friend, Miss Nora Tracey. We worked there in the olive woods, in the delicious spring of North Italy, and although it was finished at home, it was Portofino that inspired the setting of the final chapter. It further inspired us with a sentiment towards the German nation that has been most helpful during the present war, and has enabled us to accept any tale of barbarism with entire confidence.

Northern Italy was as much in the hands of the Huns then as at any time since the days of Attila. Even had their table manners been other than what they were, Siegfried Wagner, striding slowly and splendidly on the Santa Margherita Road, in a grey knickerbocker suit and pale blue stockings, or Gerhardt Hauptmann, the dramatist, with his aggressively intellectual and bright pink brow bared to the breeze, posing on the sea front, each attended by a little rabble of squaws, would have inspired a distaste vast enough to have included their entire nation. One incident of our stay at Portofino may be recounted. An old Russian Prince had come to the hotel, a small, grey old man, feeble and fragile, in charge of a daughter. Gradually a rumour grew that he had been a great musician. There was a pertinacious fiddle-playing

little German doctor, whose singular name was Willy Rahab, in the hotel; he had the art of getting what he wanted, and one evening, having played Mozart with my sister for as long as he desired to do so, he concentrated upon the old Prince. There was a long resistance, but at last the old Russian walked feebly to the piano, and seated himself on so low a stool that his wrists were below the level of the keyboard. I saw his fingers, grey and puffy, and rheumatic, settle with an effort on the keys. He looked like an ash-heap ready to crumble into dust. I said to myself that it was a brutality. And, as I said it, the ash-heap burst into flames, and Liszt's arrangement of "Die Walkürenritt" suddenly crashed, and stormed and swept. There was some element of excitement communicated by his playing that I have never known before or since, and we shook in it and were lost in it, as one shakes in a winter gale, standing on western cliffs with the wind and the spray in one's face. Then, when it was all over, the old ash-heap, greyer than ever, waited for no plaudits, resigned himself to his daughter, and was hustled off to bed. As for the hotel piano, till that moment poor but upright, after that wild ride it remained prostrate, and could in future only whisper an accompaniment to Doctor "Veely's" violin. It transpired that the Russian had been the personal friend of Wagner, of Schumann, and of Liszt, in the brave days of old at Leipsic, and was one of the few remaining repositories of the grand tradition.

We were at Montreuil, a small and very ancient town, not far from Boulogne, when "Some Further Experiences of an Irish R.M." was published. These had appeared in the *Strand* and other magazines, and had gradually accumulated until a volume became possible. We had had an offer from an Irish journal,

then, and, I think, still, unknown to fame, which was, in its way, gratifying. The editor offered "to consider a story" if we would "write one about better society than the people in the Experiences of an Irish Policeman." We were unable to meet this request. For one thing, we were unable to imagine better or more agreeable society than is the portion of an Irish Policeman. Our only regret was that the many social advantages of the R.I.C. were not more abundantly within our reach.

Montreuil was "a place of ancient peace," of placid, unmolested painting in its enchanting by-streets (where all the children, unlike those of Étaples, had been confirmed in infancy), of evenings of classical music, provided delightfully at the studios of two of our friends, who were themselves musicians, and were so happy as to have among their friends a violinist, a pianist, and a singer, all of high honour in their profession. Few things have Martin and I more enjoyed than those evenings in the high, dim-lighted studio, with a misty, scented atmosphere of flowers and coffee and cigarettes, and with the satiating beauty of a Brahms violin sonata pouring in a flood over us.

It is a temptation to me to dwell on these past summers, but I will speak of but one more, of the time we spent on the Lac d'Anneçy. We stayed for a while in the town of Anneçy, whose canals, exquisite as they are for painting, are compounded of the hundred ingredients for which Cologne is famous. From Anneçy we moved across the lake to Chavoire, whence the artist can look across the water back to Anneçy's spires and towers, and can try to decide if they are more beautiful in the white mists of morning or when the sun is sinking behind them.

That was in September, 1911, and when we got back

to London, "Dan Russel" was on the eve of coming out. An industrious niece of mine, aged some four and a half years, toiled for many months at a woolwork waistcoat, a Christmas present for her father. It was finished, not without strain, in time for the festival, and Katharine said, flinging herself into a chair, with a flourish of the long and stockingless legs with which children are afflicted, even at Christmas time,

"*Now* I'm going to read books, and never do another stitch of work till I die!"

So did Martin and I assure each other, though without the gesture that gave such effective emphasis to Katharine's determination.

We stayed luxuriously at our club, and had reviews of "Dan Russel," hot from the press, for breakfast, and I enjoyed myself enormously at the Zoo, making sketches of elephants and tigers and monkeys for a picture-book that I projected in honour of the Katharine above mentioned.

Passing pleasant it all was; alas! that the pleasure is now no longer passing, but past.

WEST CARBERY HOUNDS AT LISS ARD.

PORTOFINO.

V. F. M.

CHAPTER XXVII

VARIOUS OPINIONS

While I have been writing this book the difficulty of deciding between the things that interested Martin and me, and those that might presumably interest other people, has been ever before me. In the path of this chapter there is another and still more formidable lion, accompanied—as a schoolchild said—by "his even fiercer wife, the Tiger." By which I wish to indicate Irish politics, and Woman's Suffrage. I will take the Tiger first, and will dispose of it as briefly as may be.

Martin and I, like our mothers before us, were, are, and always will be, Suffragists, wholehearted, unshakable, and the longer we have lived the more unalterable have been our convictions. Some years ago we were honoured by being asked to join the Women's Council of the Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association; she was a Vice-President of the Munster Women's Franchise League, and I have the honour of being its President. Since speech-making, even in its least ceremonial and most confidential form, was to her, and is to me, no less appalling than would be "forcible feeding," we can at least claim that our constitutional wing of the Movement has not been without its martyrs. The last piece of writing together that Martin and I undertook was a pamphlet, written at the request of the C.U.W.F.A., entitled "With

Thanks for Kind Enquiries." It set forth to the best of our power the splendid activities of the various suffrage societies after the Great War broke out, and it pleases me to think that our work together was closed and sealed with this expression of the faith that was and is in us.

This conscientiously and considerately condensed statement will, I trust, sufficiently dispose of the Tiger. But who could hope in half a dozen lines, or in as many volumes, to state their views about Ireland? No one, I fear, save one of those intrepid beings, wondrous in their self-confidence (not to say presumption), who lightly come to Ireland for three weeks, with what they call "an open mind," which is an endowment that might be more accurately described as an open mouth, and an indiscriminate swallow. Some such have come our way, occasionally, English people whose honesty and innocence would be endearing, if they were a little less overlaid by condescension. It may be enlightening if I mention one such, who told us that he had had "such a nice car-driver." "He opened his whole heart to me," said the guileless explorer; "he told me that he and his wife and children had practically nothing to live on but the tips he got from the people he drove about!"

It was unfortunate that I had seen this heart-opening and heart-rending car-driver, and chanced to be aware that he was unmarried and in steady employment.

In my experience, Irish people, of all classes, are, as a rule, immaculately honest and honourable where money is concerned. I have often been struck by the sanctity with which money is regarded, by which I mean the money of an employer. It is a striking and entirely characteristic feature, and is in no class

more invariable than in the poorest. But, to return to the car-driver, when a large, kind fish opens his mouth to receive a fly, and one sees within it a waiting coin, it is hardly to be expected that St. Peter's example will not be followed.

As a matter of fact, the Irish man or woman does not open his or her "whole heart" to strangers. Hardly do we open them to each other. We are, unlike the English, a silent people about the things that affect us most deeply; which is, perhaps, the reason that we are, on the whole, considered to be good company. It is in keeping with the contradictiousness of Ireland that the most inherently romantic race in the British Isles is the least sentimental, the most conversational people, the most reserved, and also that Irish people, without distinction of sex or class, are pessimists about their future and that of their country. Light-hearted, humorous, cheerful on the whole, and quite confident that nothing will ever succeed.

Personally, I have a belief, unreasoning perhaps, but invincible, in the future of Ireland, which is not founded on a three weeks' study of her potentialities. No one can "run a place," or work a farm, or keep a pack of hounds, without learning something of those who are necessary to either of these processes. I have done these things for a good many years; the place may have walked more often than it ran, and the farm manager may have made more mistakes than money, and the M.F.H. probably owes it to her sex that she was spared some of the drawbacks that attend her office; but she has learnt some things in the course of the years, and one of them is that in sympathetic and intelligent service a good Irish servant has no equal, and another, that if you give an Irishman your trust he will very seldom betray it.

Not often does the personal appeal fail. Not in the country I know best, at any rate, nor in Martin's. I have heard of a case in point. A property, it matters not where, west or south, was being sold to the tenants, "under the Act," *i.e.* Mr. Gerald Balfour's Land Purchase Act, that instrument of conciliation that has emulated the millennium in protecting the cockatrice from the weaned child, and has brought peace and ensued it. I remember the regret with which a woman said that she "heard that Mr. Balfour was giving up his reins"; a phrase that has something of almost Scriptural self-abnegation about it. On this property, all had been happily settled between landlord and tenants, when a sudden hitch developed itself; a hitch essentially Irish, in that it was based upon pride, and was nourished by and rooted in a family feud. A small hill of rock, with occasional thin smears of grass, divided two of the farms. It was rated at 9*d.* a year. Each of the adjoining tenants claimed it as appertaining to his holding. The wife of one had always fed geese on it, the mother of the other was in the habit of "throwing tubs o' clothes on it to blaych." A partition was suggested by the agent, and was rejected with equal contempt by James on the one hand, and Jeremiah on the other. The priest attempted arbitration; an impartial neighbour did the same; finally the landlord, home on short leave from his ship, joined with the other conciliators, and a step or two towards a settlement was taken, but there remained about fifty yards of rock that neither combatant would yield. The sale of the estate was arrested, the consequent abatement of all rents could not come into operation, and for their oaths' sake, and the fractional value of fourpence-halfpenny, James and Jeremiah continued to sulk in their tents. At this juncture, and for the first time,

the landlord's sister, who may, non-committally, be called Lady Mary, seems to have come into the story. She interviewed James, and she held what is known as "a heart-to-heart" with Jeremiah. She even brought the latter to the point of conceding twenty yards; the former had already as good as promised that he would yield fifteen. There remained therefore fifteen yards, an irreducible minimum. Lady Mary, however, remained calm. She placed a combatant each on his ultimate point of concession. Then, in, so she has told me, an awful silence, she paced the fifteen yards. At seven yards and a carefully measured half, she, not without difficulty, drove her walking-stick into a crevice of the rock. Still in silence, and narrowly observed by the disputants, she collected a few stones, and, like a Hebrew patriarch, she built, round the walking-stick, a small altar. Then she stood erect, and looking solemnly upon James and Jeremiah,

"Now men," she said, "In the name of God, let this be the bounds."

And it was so.

What is more, a few Sundays later, one of the twain, narrating the incident after Mass, said with satisfaction,

"It failed the agent, and it failed the landlord, and it failed the priest; but Lady Mary settled it!"

As a huntsman I knew used to say (relative to puppy-walking), "It's all a matter o' taact. I never see the cook yet I couldn't get over!"

A cousin of my mother's, whose name, were I to disclose it, would be quickly recognised as that of a distinguished member of a former Conservative administration, and an orator in whom the fires of Bushe and Plunket had flamed anew, once told me that he had occasion to consult Disraeli on some

matter in connection with Ireland. He found him lying ill, on a sofa, clad in a gorgeous, flowered dressing-gown, and with a scarlet fez on his ringlets.

"Ah, Ireland, my dear fellow," he said, languidly, "that damnable delightful country, where everything that is right is the opposite of what it ought to be!"

There was never a truer word; Ireland is a law unto herself and cannot be dogmatised about. Of the older Ireland, at least, it can be said that an appeal to generosity or to courtesy did not often fail. Of the newer Ireland I am less certain. I remember knocking up an old postmaster, after hours, on a Sunday, and asking for stamps, abjectly, and with the apologies that were due.

"Ah then!" said the postmaster, with a decent warmth of indignation that it should be thought he exacted apologies in the matter; "It 'd be the funny Sunday that I'd refuse stamps to a lady!"

My other instance, of the newer Ireland, is also of a post-office, this time in a small town that prides itself on its republican principles. A child deposited a penny upon the counter, and said to the lady in charge, "A pinny stamp, please."

"Say-Miss-ye-brat!" replied the lady in charge, in a single sabre-cut of Saxon speech.

* * * * *

Martin had ever been theoretically opposed to Home Rule for Ireland, and was wont to combat argument in its favour with the forebodings which may be read in the following letters. They were written to her friend, Captain Stephen Gwynn, in response to some very interesting letters from him (which, with hers to him, he has most kindly allowed me to print here). Her love of Ireland, combined with her distrust of some of those newer influences in Irish affairs to which her letters refer, made her

dread any weakening of the links that bind the United Kingdom into one, but I believe that if she were here now, and saw the changes that the past eighteen months have brought to Ireland, she would be quick to welcome the hope that Irish politics are lifting at last out of the controversial rut of centuries, and that although it has been said of East and West that "never the two shall meet," North and South will yet prove that in Ireland it is always the impossible that happens.

V. F. M. to Captain Stephen Gwynn, M.P.

"Drishane House,
"Skibbereen.
"*Feb.* 1, 1912.

". . . . The day after —— was here I rode on a large horse, of mild and reflective habit, away over a high hill, where farms reached up to the heather. We progressed by a meandering lane from homestead to homestead, and the hill grass was beautifully green and clean, and the sun shone upon it in an easterly haze. There was ploughing going on, and all the good, quiet work that one longs to do, instead of brain-wringing inside four walls. I wondered deeply and sincerely whether Home Rule could increase the peacefulness, or whether it will not be like upsetting a basket of snakes over the country. These people have bought their land. They manage their own local affairs. Must there be yet another upheaval for them—and a damming up of Old Age Pensions, which now flow smoothly and balmily among them, to the enormous comfort and credit of the old people? (And since I saw my mother's old age and death I have understood the innermost of that tragedy of failing life.)

"My Cousin and I, in our small way, live in the

manner that seems advisable for Ireland. We make money in England and we spend it over here. We are sorry for those who have to live in London, but Ireland cannot support us all without help.

"You will understand now how badly I bored your friend, and how long-suffering he was."

From Captain Stephen Gwynn, M.P., to V. F. M.

"House of Commons.
"*Feb. 8th*, 1912.

"Your letter filled me with a desire to talk to you for about 24 hours, concerning Ireland. Why snakes? . . . . what demoralisation is going to come to your nice country-side because they send —— or another, to sit in Dublin and vote on Irish affairs, which he understands less or more, instead of hanging round at St. Stephens?

"We have too much *abstract* politics in Ireland, we want them real and concrete. Take Old Age Pensions, for instance. I don't for an instant believe that the pension will ever be cut down, but I do think that an Irish Assembly ought to decide whether farmers should qualify for it by giving their farms to their sons. I do think that we ought to be able to pass a law enabling us to put a ferry across Corrib with local money; it is now impossible because of one Englishman's opposition. I think we ought to be able to tackle the whole transit question, including the liberation of canals from railway control, and including also the Train Ferry and All Red Route possibilities. In 1871 Lord Hartington said it was a strong argument for Home Rule that a Royal Commission had reported in 1867 for the State control of Irish railways, forty years ago, and nothing has been done but to appoint another Commission. Poor

Law, the whole Education system—all these things want an assembly of competent men, with leisure and local knowledge. You think we can't get them? That is the trouble with people like you. You know the peasantry very well; you don't know the middle class . . . . There are plenty of men in Ireland—men of the Nationalist party—brilliant young men, like Kettle,* who has also courage and enterprise. He once gave us all a lead in a very ugly corner with a crowd.

"Devlin is to my thinking as good a man as Lloyd George, and that is a big word. Redmond and Dillon seem to me more like statesmen than anyone on either front bench. Of course, in many cases here you feel the want of an educated tradition behind. No one can count the harm that was done by keeping Catholics out of Trinity Coll., Dublin. But beside the Nationalists there will be no disinclination to employ other educated men, witness Kavanagh. Some of our fiercer people wanted to stop his election, right or wrong, but we reasoned them over, and once he got into the party no man was better listened to, even when, as sometimes happened, he differed with the majority . . . . He would be in an Irish Parliament, in one house or the other, and a better public man could not be found . . . . To my mind the present System *breeds* what you have called 'snakes.' In Clare, among the finest people I ever met in Ireland, you have the beastly and abominable shooting, and no man will bring another to justice. They are out of their bearings to the law, and will be, till they are made to feel it is their own law. And the scandal of bribery in 'Local Elections' will never be put down till you have a central assembly where things

* Professor Kettle was killed, fighting in France, in the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Ginchy, in September, 1916.

will be thrashed out without any fear of seeming to back 'Dublin Castle' against a 'good Nationalist.'

"For Gentlefolk (to use the old word) who want to live in the country, Ireland is going to be a better place to live in than it has been these thirty years—yes, or than before, for it is bad for people to be a caste. They will get their place in public business, easily and welcome, those who care to take it, but on terms of equality, with the rest. Don't tell me that Ireland isn't a pleasanter place for men like Kavanagh or Walter Nugent, than for the ordinary landlord person who talks about 'we' and 'they.'

"Caste is at the bottom of nine-tenths of our trouble. A Catholic bishop said to me, drink did a lot of harm in Ireland, but not half as much as gentility. Everybody wanting to be a clerk. Catholic clerks anxious to be in Protestant tennis clubs, Protestant tennis clubs anxious to keep out Catholic clerks, and so on, and so on. My friend, a guest for anybody's house in London, in half of Dublin socially impossible.

"I am prophesying, no doubt, but I know, and you, with all your knowledge and your insight *don't* know—what is best worth knowing in Ireland, better even than the lovely ways of the peasant folk. I've seen and rubbed shoulders with men in the making.

"You don't, for instance, know D. E., who used to drive a van in —— and was a Fenian in arms, and the starved orphan of a —— labourer first of all,—and is now the very close personal friend of a high official personage. Now, if ever I met Don Quixote I met him in the shoes of D. E.; if you like a little want of training to digest the education that he acquired, largely in gaol, but with a real love of fine thoughts. If Sterne could have heard D. E. and another old warrior, E. P. O'Kelly—and a very charming, shrewd old person—quoting 'Tristram

Shandy' which they got by heart in Kilmainham, Sterne would have got more than perhaps he deserved in the way of satisfaction.

"This inordinate epistle is my very embarrassing tribute. You know so much. You and yours stand for so much that is the very choice essence of Ireland, that it fills me with distress to see you all standing off there in your own paddock, distrustful and not even curious about the life you don't necessarily touch.

"You and I will both live, probably, to see a new order growing up. I daresay it may not attract you, and may disappoint me, only, for heaven's sake, don't think it is going to be all 'snakes.'

"And do forgive me for having inflicted all this on you. After all, you needn't read it—and very likely you can't! . . . . "

V. F. M. to Captain Gwynn, M.P.

"Drishane House,
"Skibbereen,
"*Feb.* 10, 1912.

"I do indeed value your letter, and like to think you snatched so much from your busy day in order to write it. . . . By 'snakes' in Ireland, I mean a set of new circumstances, motives, influences, and possibilities acting on people's lives and characters, and causing disturbance. My chief reason for this fear that I have is that Irish Nationalism is not one good solid piece of homespun. It is a patch work. There are some extremely dangerous factors in it, one of the worst being the Irish-American revolutionary. The older Fenianism lives there, *plus* all that is least favourable in American republicanism. . . . (These) will look on Ireland as the depot and jumping-off place for their animosity to England. Apart from

America there is much hostility to England, dormant and theoretical, innate and inherited—and it is fostered by certain Gaelic League teachings. Here again I speak only of what I know personally. I have seen the prize book of Irish poetry given at a 'Feis' to a little boy as a prize for dancing. A series of war songs against England. . . . You see what I am aiming at. There are dangerous elements in Ireland, and strong ones, Irish-American, Gaelic League, Sinn Fein, and what I feel very uncertain about is whether straight and genuine and tolerant people, like you, will have the power to control them. With the Home Rule banner gone, what is to keep them in hand? . . . I am sure that you will despise this feeling on my part. You feel that the Church of Rome is with you, and that with its help all will fall into line. And you feel that men of high and practical talent are with you and must prevail . . . A Roman Catholic ascendancy and government will bring Socialism, because now-a-days Socialism is the complementary colour of R.C. government or ascendancy. America will play its part there—the general trend of the world will continue; the priesthood knows it, and I am sorry for them. I do not want to see them dishonoured and humiliated. I know their influence for good as well as I know the danger of the policy of their Church. That is my second point. A Vatican policy for Ireland it will have to be, under Home Rule, or else the Priesthood is shouldered aside, and that is an ugly and demoralising thing. The religious question is deep below all others, and we all are aware of that. There is perfect toleration between the Protestants and Catholics individually (except for the North). All, as far as I have ever known, is give and take and good-breeding on the subject. We accept the Holydays of the

R.C. Church (which are still in full force in the West) and they go to early Mass in order that they may drive us to church later in the day. There is no trouble whatever, and we go to each other's funerals, etc. ! But the larger policy of the Church of Rome is a different thing, and a dangerous—and Socialism is its Nemesis. . . .

" I wish that I did know the men you speak of. I am sure they are tip-top men, and no one realises more than I do the talent and the genius that lie among the Irish lower and middle classes. I am not quite clear as to what either you or I mean by ' middle classes,' I think of well-to-do farmers, and small professional people in the towns. We know both these classes pretty well down here. . . . Last year we had a middle-class man at luncheon here, an able business man, working like a nigger, and an R.C. and Home Ruler. We discussed the matter. He said, as all you genuine people say and believe, that once Home Rule was granted, the good men among Protestant Unionists would be selected, and the wasters flung aside. I said, and still say, that the brave and fair thing would be to select them *beforehand*, show trust in them, give them confidence, and then indeed there would be a strong case for Home Rule. His argument was that they must keep up this artificial, feverish, acrid agitation, or their case falls to the ground. Two exactly opposite points of view.

" The people that I am most afraid of are the town politicians. I am not fond of anything about towns ; they are full of second-hand thinking ; they know nothing of raw material and the natural philosophy of the country people. As to caste, it is in the towns that the *vulgar* idea of caste is created. The country people believe in it strongly ; they cling to a belief in

what it should stand for of truth and honour—and there the best classes touch the peasant closely, and understand each other. 'A lady's word.'[1] How often has that been brought up before me as a thing incorruptible and unquestionable, and it incites one, and humbles one, and gives a consciousness of deep responsibility.

"I think the social tight places you speak of exist just as tightly in England, Scotland, and Wales. Social ambition is vulgarity, of course, and even a republican spirit does not cure it—witness America. It is not Ireland alone that is 'sicklied o'er with the pale thought of caste!' . . . I venture to think that your friend looks on me with a friendly eye, especially since I told him that my foster-mother took me secretly, as a baby to the priest and had me baptised. It was done for us all, and my father and mother knew it quite well, and never took any notice. I was also baptised by Lord Plunket in the drawing-room at Ross, so the two Churches can fight it out for me! . . ."

V. F. M. to Captain Gwynn.

"Drishane,
"*Nov.* 8, 1912.

"It is nice of you to let the authors of 'Dan Russel' know that what they said has helped[2] . . . and I can assure you that it gives us real pleasure to think of it.

"I am very glad that you yourself like it, and feel with us about John Michael and Mrs. Delanty.

"One does not meet these people out of Ireland; they are a blend not to be arrived at elsewhere. But

[1] To this may be added a companion phrase. "A Gentleman's bargain; no huxthering!"

[2] See Appendix II.

I wish there were more John Michaels; shyness is so nice a quality when it goes deep. In fact all really nice people have shy hearts, I think—but their friends enjoy the quality more than they do, . . . I was up in the North myself at the Signing of the Covenant, not in Belfast, but in the country. I went up on a visit there, not as a journalist, but when I saw what I saw I wrote an article about it for the *Spectator*. I did not know the North at all . . . I send you what I wrote, because it is an honest impression. What surprised me about the place was the feeling of cleverness, and go, and also the people struck me as being hearty. If only the South would go up North and see what they are doing there, and how they are doing it, and ask them to show them how, it would make a good deal of difference. And then the North should come South and see what nice people we are, and how we do *that!* Your lovely Donegal I did not see, but hope to do that next time. You need not send back the *Spectator*, because that is a heavy supertax on the reader."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST

She hid it always, close against her breast,
A golden vase, close sealed and strangely wrought,
And set with gems, whose dim eyes, mystery fraught,
Shot broken gleams, like secrets half confessed.
" One day," she said, " Love's perfumed kisses pressed
Against its lip their perfectness, unsought,
And suddenly the dizzy fragrance caught
My senses in its mesh, and gave them rest.
And life's disquietude no more I feel,
For now," she said, " my heart sleeps still and light.
Love's Anodyne outlasts the lingering years ! "
But in the darkness of an autumn night
Her heart woke, weeping, and she brake the seal.
The scent was dead; the vase was full of tears.

I HAVE come to what must be the final chapter, and the thought most present with me is that in writing it I am closing the door on these memories of two lives that made the world a pleasant place for each other, and I find now that although I began them with reluctance, it is with reluctance still that I must end them.

It has been hard, often, to leave untold so many of those trivial things that counted for more, in the long run, than the occasional outstanding facts of two quite uneventful lives. I fear I have yielded too much to the temptation of telling and talking

nonsense, and now there remains only the Appendix in which to retrieve Martin's character and mine for intelligence and for a serious concern for the things that are serious.

To return to our work, which for us, at all events, if for no one else, was serious. As soon as we had recovered from "Dan Russel," Martin set forth on what I find entered in my diary as "a series of tribal war-dances round the County Galway," which meant that she paid visits, indefatigably, and with entire satisfaction, in her own county and among her own allies and kinsfolk. I should like to quote her account of a visit to one of her oldest friends, Lady Gregory, at Coole Park, where she met (and much enjoyed meeting) Mr. W. B. Yeats, and where she, assisted by the poet, carved her initials on a tree dedicated to the Muses, whereon A. E., and Dr. Douglas Hyde, and others of high achievement had inscribed themselves. But I must hold to the ordinance of silence as to living people that she herself ordained and would wish me to observe.

No one ever enjoyed good company more than Martin, and, as the beggars say, she "thravelled the County Galway," and there was good company and a welcome before her wherever she went.

At about this time she and I were invited to a public dinner in Dublin, given to Irish literary women by the Corinthian Club; and, having secured exemption from speech-making, we found it a highly interesting entertainment, at which were materialised for us many who till then had been among the things believed in but not seen. At this time also, or a little later, I re-established the West Carbery Hounds, after a brief interregnum. I only now allude to them in order to record the fact that when the first draft of the reconstituted pack arrived, the lamented

" Slipper " (now no more) met them at the station with an enormous bouquet of white flowers in what might have begun life as a button-hole, and a tall hat. He cheered the six couples as they left the station yard (accompanied, it may not be out of place to mention, ridiculously, by two and a half gambolling couples of black and white British-Holstein young cattle, on a herd of which magpie breed my sister and I were embarking), and then, as the procession moved like a circus through the streets of Skibbereen, " Slipper " renewed the task of drinking all their healths, this time at my expense.

The doctrine that sincere friendship is only possible between men dies hard. It is, at last, in the fulness of time, expiring by force of fact, and is now, like many another decayed convention, dragging out a deplorable old age in facetious paragraphs in " Comic Corners," where the Mother-in-law, Mrs. Gamp and her ministrations, and the Unfortunate Husband (special stress being laid on the sufferings endured by the latter while his wife is enjoying herself upstairs) gibber together, and presumably amuse someone.

The outstanding fact, as it seems to me, among women who live by their brains, is friendship. A profound friendship that extends through every phase and aspect of life, intellectual, social, pecuniary. Anyone who has experience of the life of independent and artistic women knows this ; and it is noteworthy that these friendships of women will stand even the strain of matrimony for one or both of the friends. I gravely doubt that David saw much of Jonathan after the death of Uriah.

However, controversy, and especially controversy of this complexion, is a bore. As Martin said, in a letter to me,

" Rows are a mistake ; which is the only reason I

don't fight with you for invariably spelling 'practice,' the noun, with an 's.'"

Martin had a very special gift for friendship, both with women and with men. Her sympathies were wide, and her insight into character and motive enabled her to meet each of her many friends on their own ground, and to enter deeply and truly into their lives, and give them a share in hers.

In spite of the ordinance of silence, I feel as if she would wish me to record in this book the names, at least, of some of those whom she delighted to honour, and, with all diffidence, I beg them to understand that in the very brief mention of them that will be found in the Appendix, I have only ventured to do this because I believe that she desires it.

I suppose it was the result of old habit, and of the return of the hounds, but, for whatever reason, during the years that followed the appearance of "Dan Russel the Fox," Martin and I put aside the notions we had been dwelling upon in connection with "a serious novel," and took to writing "R.M." stories again. These, six couple of them (like the first draft of the re-established pack), wandered through various periodicals, chiefly *Blackwood's Magazine*, and in July, 1915, they were published in a volume with the title of "In Mr. Knox's Country."

We were in Kerry when the book appeared, or rather we were on our way there. I remember with what anxiety I bought a *Spectator* at the Mallow platform bookstall, and even more vividly do I recall our departure from Mallow, when Martin, and Ethel Penrose, and I, all violently tried to read the *Spectator* review of Mr. Knox at the same moment.

* * * * * *

I will say nothing now of the time that we spent

in Kerry ; a happy time, in lovely weather, in a lovely place. It was the last of many such times, and it is too near, now, to be written of.

I will try no more. Withered leaves, blowing in through the open window before a September gale, are falling on the page. Our summers are ended. " ' Vanity of vanities,' saith the Preacher."

I have tried to write of the people, and the things, and the events that she loved and was interested in. It has been a happiness to me to do so, and at times, while I have been writing, the present has been forgotten and I have felt as though I were recapturing some of the " careless rapture " of older days.

The world is still not without its merits ; I am not ungrateful, and I have many reasons that are not all in the past, and one in especial of which I will not now speak, for gratitude. But there is a thing that an old widow woman said, long ago, that remains in my mind. Her husband—she spoke of him as " her kind companion "—had died, and she said to me, patiently, and without tears,

" Death makes people lonesome, my dear."

FINIS.

APPENDIX I

LETTERS FROM CHIEF JUSTICE CHARLES KENDAL BUSHE TO MRS. BUSHE

Charles Kendal Bushe to Mrs. Bushe.

Waterford. (Undated.)

Probably July or August, 1798.

"Within this day or two the United Irishmen rose in the Co Kilkenny and disarm'd every gentleman and man in the County except Pierce Butler. O'Flaherty, Davis, Nixon, Lee, and Tom Murphy was not spar'd and they even beat up the Quarters of Bob's Seraglio, but he had the day before taken the precaution to remove his arms, and among them my double barrell'd Gun, to Pierce Butler's as a place of safety, so that no arms remain'd but the arms of his Dulcinea, but what they did in that respect Bob says not . . . . The United men have done one serious mischief which is that they have discredited Bank notes to such a degree that in Wexford no one wd give a Crown for a national note or take one in payment and here tho they take them they wont give Change for them so that at the Bar Room we are oblig'd to pass little promissory notes for our Dinner and pay them when they come to a Guinea. I assure you if you ow'd 17 shillgs here no one wou'd give you four and take a Guinea. As to Gold it is vanish'd. I have receiv'd

but 2 Gold Guineas in £133.0.0 since I came on Circuit. There is a good deal of Alarm about these United Men every where."

Another letter, written at about the same time as the above, is dated "Wexford, July twenty sixth. 1798." It seems to have been written while on circuit, a short time after the suppression of the Rebellion.

Charles Kendal Bushe to Mrs. Bushe.

"My dearest Nancy,

"We return by Ross" (Co. Wexford) "both for greater safety and that we may see the scene of the famous battle." (This probably was Vinegar Hill). "From every observation I can make it appears to me that this Country is completely quieted; if you were to hear all the different anecdotes told here you wou'd suppose you were reading another Helen Maria Williams. I shall give you but one—Col. Lehunte who is very civil to us was a prisoner to the Rebels and tolerably well treated as such till one day in the tattering (*sic*) of his house a Room—furnish'd with antique ornaments in black and *orange* was discover'd a small Skreen in the same colours with heathen divinities on it. This Skreen was carried instantly by the enrag'd mob thro the town as a proof of an intended Massacre by the Orange Men. This Skreen, says the famous fury Mrs. Dixon, was to be the standard of their Cavalry. This, (Hope) is the anchor on which the Catholic sailors were to be roasted alive— This, (Jupiter's Eagle) is the Vulture that was to pick out the Catholic Children's Eyes— She went thro the Mythology of the Skreen in this rational Exposition and entirely convinc'd the Mob. In a moment Col. Lehunte was dragg'd out to Execution

and his life was sav'd in the same manner his house was, by the number of disputants who shou'd take it. He received three pike wounds and was beat almost to death with sticks and the end of firelocks and at last taken back for a more deliberate Execution in the morning, being thrown for the night into a Dungeon where he lay wounded on fetters, bolts, and broken Bottles. This is a venerable old Gentleman, near 70 years old.

"We hear many such stories. The Bridge is deep stain'd with blood.

"Ever yours, my darling Nancy,

"C. K. Bushe."

The temptation to quote extensively from these early letters of "the Chief" cannot be too freely indulged in, but I may include an account, written from Clonmel, in about 1797, to his wife, giving an account of what he calls "a most novel and extraordinary and disgusting species of crime"; which is a moderate way of defining the comprehensive atrocity of the act in question.

Charles Kendal Bushe to Mrs. Bushe.

Clonmel. (*circa* 1797.)

". . . . The woman was clearly convicted and will be exemplarily punish'd for it. She robb'd a churchyard of the hand of a dead man which she put into all the milk she churn'd. Butter making is a great part of the trade of the Country and the unfortunate Wretch was persuaded that this hand drawn thro the Milk in the devil's name would give a miraculous quantity of butter, and it seems *she has long* made it a practice."

From Chief Justice Bushe to Mrs. Bushe.

"Omagh. *Monday August* 16. 1810.

"My dearest Nan,

"By making a forc'd march with Smyly here I have arrived some hours before the other Judge, Cavalcade &c. and I have for the first time since I left town sat down in a room by myself with something like tranquillity, at least that negative Repose that consists in the absence of stress or clamour fuss and hurry. The day has fortunately been good and without stopping we rode here, 21 miles across the mountains. This I found pleasant and indeed necessary after the Confinement and bad weather which we have had uninterruptedly since we left Dublin. You have no notion of such a den as Cavan is. It is no wonder that poor Smyly us'd to get fever in it, I am only astonish'd that I ever got out of it for I was not for a moment well. It lies at the bottom of a Bason form'd by many hills closing in on each other, and is surrounded by bogs and lakes. The Sun can scarcely reach it, you look up at the heavens as you do out of a jail yard that has high walls and I was glad to have a large Turf fire in my Room. The Water is quite yellow and deranges the stomach &c. so that my poor head was a mass of confusion and my Spirits were slack enough . . . . After breakfast, bad as the day was, I got a boat and went on the lake (Lough Erne) and sail'd to the Island of Devenish where there is a curious Ruin of an antient place of worship and a Round Tower in as perfect preservation as the day it was built . . . . Short as the time was if the weather had been favourable I was determined upon seeing Lough Derg and St. Patrick's purgatory which is in a small island in the middle of it and which is in its

history certainly one of the greatest Curiositics in Europe.[1] It has maintained its Character as the principal place of penance in the World since the first Establishment of Christianity in Ireland and is as much frequented now by Pilgrims from all Countries as it was in what we are in the habit of calling the darker ages, as freely as if our own was enlighten'd. Miller's house is about ten miles from it and he has by enquiries from the Priests and otherwise ascertained that the average number of pilgrims during the season which begins with the Summer and ends with the first of August exceeds ten thousand. This last Season in this present year the number was much greater. They all perform their journey barefooted

[1] "Evidence of the widespread fame of St. Patrick's Purgatory, Lough Derg, Co. Donegal, in mediaeval days is furnished by a document recently copied from the Chancery treaty roll of Richard II. This is a safe conduct issued on the 6th September, 1397, to Raymond Viscount of Perilleux, Knight of Rhodes, a subject of the King of France, who desired to make the pilgrimage. It was addressed to all constables, marshals, admirals, senechals, governors, bailiffs, prefects, captains, castellans, majors, magistrates, counsellors of cities and towns, guardians of camps, ports, bridges and passways, and their subordinates—in a word, to all those who under one title or another exercised some authority in those days—and recited that Raymond 'intends and purposes to come into our Kingdom of England and to cross over and travel through the said Kingdom to our land of Ireland, there to see and visit the Purgatory of St. Patrick, with twenty men and thirty horses in his company.' The conduct went on to enjoin that any of the little army of officials mentioned above should not molest the said Raymond during his journey to Lough Derg, nor during his return therefrom, nor as far as in them lay should they permit injury to him, his men, horses or property; provided always that the Viscount and his men on entering any camp, castle or fortified town, should present the letter of safe conduct to the guardians of the place, and in purchasing make fair and ready payment for food or other necessaries. The safe conduct was valid until the Easter of the following year. Besides showing that over five hundred years ago foreigners were anxious to make the pilgrimage which so many make in the present age, the document is interesting inasmuch as it gives an indication of the difficulties under which a pilgrim or tourist travelled in the fourteenth century." (*Cork Examiner*, August 8, 1917.)

and in mean Dress but those of the upper Class are discover'd by the delicacy of their hands and feet. There is a large ferry Boat which from morning to night is employ'd in transporting and retransporting them. Each Pilgrim remains 24 hours in the Island performing Devotions round certain stone altars call'd Stations, at which five Priests perpetually officiate. All this time and for some time before they strictly fast, and on leaving the Island the Priest gives them what is called Bread and Wine, that is Bread and Lake water which they positively assert has the Taste of wine and the power of refreshing and recovering them . . . ."

The end of this letter, giving a description of a visit to Edgeworthstown, appears in the book, Chapter II, page 47.

APPENDIX II

The following is written by Captain Stephen Gwynn, M.P., Member for Galway City, who has very kindly permitted me to include it among these memories.

Probably no one can have really known "Martin Ross" who did not spend some time in her company either in Connemara or West Cork. I, to my sorrow, only met her once, at a Dublin dinner table. That hour's talk has left on my mind a curiously limited and even negative impression. She looked surprisingly unlike a person who spent much of her life in the open air; and it was hard to associate her with the riotous humour of many "R.M." stories. What remains positive in the impression is a sense of extreme fineness and delicacy, qualities which reflect themselves in the physical counterparts of that restraint and sure taste which are in the essence of all that she signed.

That one meeting served me well, however, because out of it arose casually an intermittent correspondence which passed into terms of something like friendship. Once at all events I traded, as it were, on a friend's kindness; for when a boy of mine lay sick abroad, and I was seeking for acceptable things to bring to his bedside, I wrote repeatedly to Martin Ross, provoking replies from a most generous letter-writer—letters very touching in their kindness.

But most of our communications had their source

in the prompting which urged her to speak her mind to a Nationalist Member of Parliament, concerning happenings in Ireland. These letters show how gravely and anxiously she thought about her country, and events have written a grim endorsement on certain of her apprehensions. She was never of those who can be content to regard Ireland as a pleasant place for sport, full of easy, laughable people ; or she would never have understood Ireland with that intensity which can be felt even in her humour. If her letters show that she was often angry with her countrymen, they show too that it was because she could not be indifferent to the honour of Ireland.

September, 1917.

APPENDIX III

HER FRIENDS

In trying to include in these divagations the names of some of the chief among the friends of Martin Ross, I am met at once by the thought of her brothers and sisters. These were first in her life, and they held their place in it, and in her heart, in a manner that is not always given to brothers and sisters. Two griefs, the death of her eldest brother, Robert, and of the sister next to her in age, Edith Dawson, struck her with a force that can best be measured by what the loss of two people so entirely lovable meant to others less near to them than she. Handsome and amusing, charming and generous, one may go on heaping up adjectives, yet come no nearer to explaining to those who did not know Edith what was lost when she died. Many of the times to which Martin looked back with most enjoyment were spent with Edith and her husband, Cuthbert Dawson. Colonel Dawson was then in the Queen's Bays, and Martin's stories of those soldiering days were full of riding, and steam-launching, and motoring (the last at an early period in history, when, in Connemara at all events, a motor was described by the poor people as "a hell-cart," and received as such). All these things, and the more dangerous the better, were what she and Edith found their pleasure in,

with the spirit that took all the fun that was going in its stride, and did not flinch when trouble, suffering, and sorrow had to be faced.

Of Robert, she has herself written, and now but one brother and one sister of all that brilliant family remain; Mr. James Martin, the Head of the House, and Mrs. Hamilton Currey, whose husband, the late Commander Hamilton Currey, R.N., was a distinguished writer on naval matters, and was one whose literary opinion was very deeply valued by Martin.

She was, as Captain Gwynn has said, "a generous letter-writer," and I have been allowed by him and by one of her very special friends, Mrs. Campbell, to make extracts from some of her letters to them. Her letters, as Mrs. Campbell says, "have so much of her delightful self in them," that I very much regret that, for various reasons, I have not been able to print more of them.

Another of her great friends was Miss Nora Tracey, with whom she was staying in Ulster at the tremendous moment of the signing of the Ulster Covenant. Few things ever made a deeper political impression upon Martin than did that visit, and the insight that she then gained into Ulster and its fierce intensity of purpose did not cease to influence her views. Whatever political opinions may be held, and however much the attitude of No Compromise may be regretted, the impressiveness of Ulster has to be acknowledged. No one was more sensitive to this than Martin, and an article that, at this time, she wrote and sent to the *Spectator* was inspired by what she saw and heard in the North during that time of crisis.

Name after name of her friends comes to me, and I can only feel the futility of writing them down,

and thinking that in so doing it is possible to explain her talent for friendship, her fine and faithful enthusiasm for the people whom she liked ; still less to indicate how much their affection, and interest, and sympathy helped to fill her life, and to make it what it was, a happy one.

A few names at least I may record.

Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Helps, Rose Helps, Mr. C. L. Graves, Lady Gregory, Mrs. Wynne (who is one of Lord Morris's daughters, and is one of a family of old Galway friends and neighbours), Miss Gertrude Sweetnam, Miss A. S. Kinkead, Sir Horace Plunkett, Fan Morris, " Jem " Barlow, and Martin Ross's kinsman, Mr. Justice Archer Martin, Justice of Appeal, Victoria, B.C.

It is of no avail to prolong the list, though I could do so (and I ask to be forgiven for unintentional omissions), and I will do no more than touch on her many friends among our many relations. Rose Barton, Ethel Penrose (my own oldest friend, loved by Martin more than most), Violet Coghill, Loo-Loo Plunket, Jim Penrose (that " Professor of Embroidery and Collector of Irish Point " to whom she dedicated the " Patrick's Day Hunt "), and, nearest of all after her own family, my sister and my five brothers, to all of whom she was as another sister, only, as the Army List says, " with precedence of that rank."

An end must come. I am afraid I have forgotten much, and I know I have failed in much that I had hoped to do, but I know, too, however far I may have come short, that the memory of Martin Ross is safe with her friends.

APPENDIX IV

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